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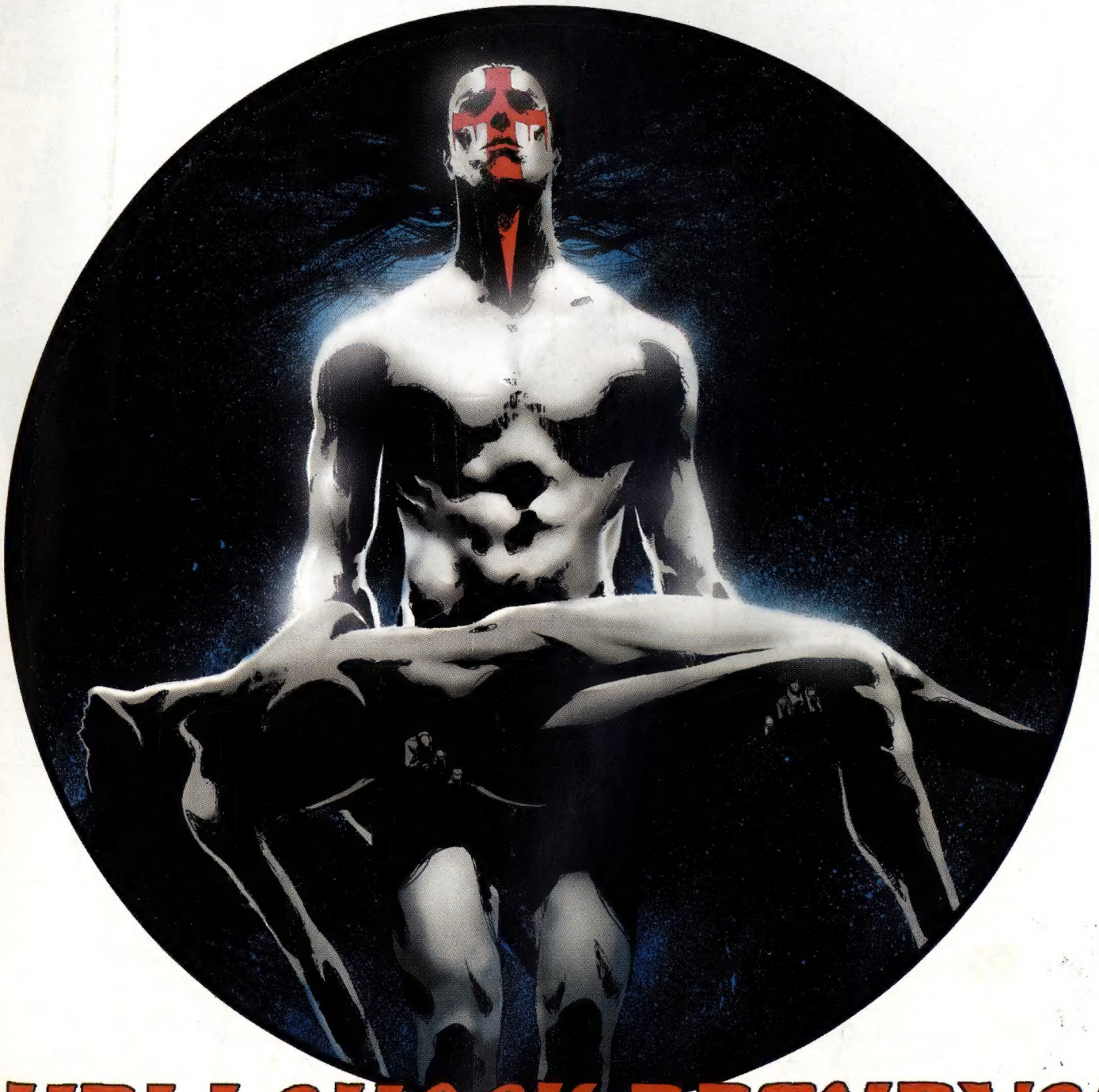

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Published monthly as an independent trade paper for the comics industry by Quality Communications Ltd. Editor/publisher: Derek G. Skinn. Associate editor: Sarah Bolesworth. News editor: Phil Hall. Copy editor: Kerry-Ann Hurley. Printed by East End Offset, London E3 (0171-538 2521)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

British Isles: £12.00 for 12 issues.
USA & Canada: $60 US for 12 issues (air).
Australasia: £40 sterling for 12 issues (air).
Mainland Europe & Eire: £30 for 12 issues.
Make all payments to Comics International at: Comics International, (Subscriptions Dept), 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD

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NEWS · AMERICA ·

The new Superman

ONE OF America's 20th century icons, Superman, is to receive a complete overhaul in March. His world-famous costume changes from its familiar red, yellow and blue to a new style sky blue and white, with even the trademark "S" chest symbol being revised, along with the hero's powers.

After almost 60 years, the last son of Krypton will look and be so different that only the name remains the same.

The plot device used for this radical change is that after losing his solar-created powers during the sun-less DC **Final Night** storyline, Superman has struggled to control his returning but evolving abilities and in **Superman** #123, by Dan Jurgens and Ron Frenz, the storyline comes to a head with the creation of a new-look Superman.

As he adjusts to his new powers, Superman receives unexpected help along with a new costume — which enables him to channel his new found abilities. The identity of the mysterious benefactor will be revealed in forthcoming issues of the Superman titles.

The direct market edition of **Superman** #123 is a regular $1.95 32-page issue but with a glow-in-the-dark card cover. The newsstand version, also $1.95, features a non-enhanced cover.

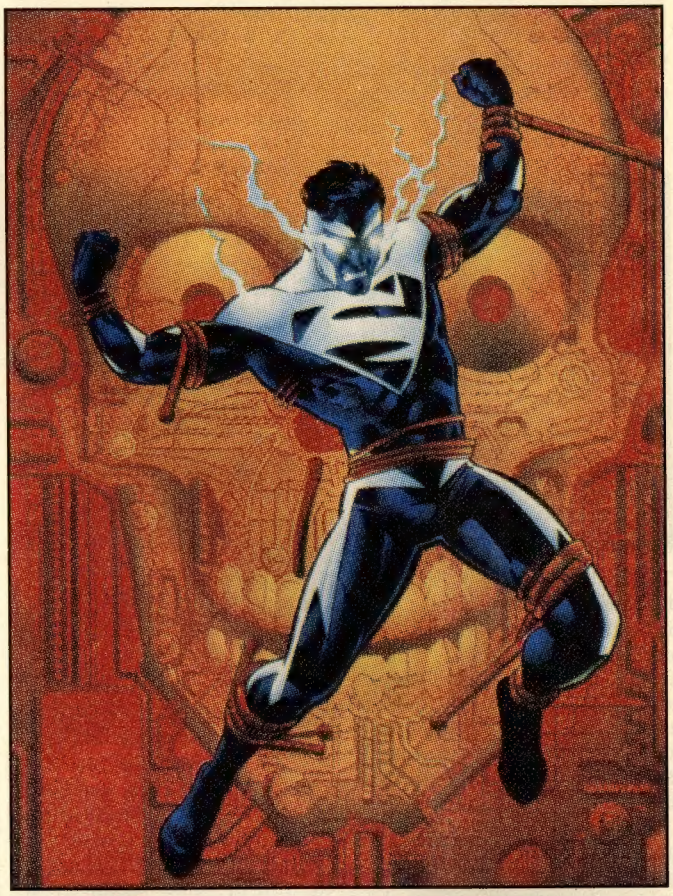
The story then moves to **Adventures of Superman** #546, when creators Karl Kesel and Stuart Immonen reintroduce a villain who may be able to stop the new-look Man of Energy — Metallo *(cover above)*.

With his similar energy powers, The Ray then lends a hand in the following week's **Action Comics** #733 by David Michelinie and Tom Grummett, as Superman begins to control his new abilities.

"All of his traditional powers are gone," said Superman group editor Joey Cavalieri. "Instead of the living solar battery he's always been, Superman is now an energy being. Instead of bullets bouncing off him, they now either pass through him or get caught in his energy matrix.

"Superman doesn't exactly fly anymore, he zaps from place to place like a bolt of lightning," he concluded.

Perhaps enabling the newly-wed hero to consumate his marriage, the other big change is that, in a Captain Marvel fashion, when Superman switches from his energy form into Clark Kent, his powers also disappear, leaving him with no more abilities than a normal human being.



*From the Man of Steel to the Man of Energy: the new-look Superman as he appears in **Adventures of Superman** #564 by Karl Kesel and Stuart Immonen.*

***Superman: Man of Steel** ships March 5; **Superman** #123, with an enhanced cover, ships March 12; **Adventures of Superman** #546 ships March 19 and **Action Comics** #733 ships March 26, all retail for $1.95.*

COVER: *Following a two-year sabbatical, Jae Lee returns with **Hellshock** volume 2 from Image Comics. Interview and competition on pages 29 and 29 this issue.*

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New readers: begin here

***Comics International** is a monthly industry newspaper devoted to the comics medium. As such, it provides details of forthcoming UK and US comics and related items, together with reviews and commentary on current titles.*

Certain products mentioned are not available through regular news agent outlets, but only from the 'direct sale' comics specialist retailers and mail order companies. Details of specialist outlets are advertised throughout the magazine, and a listing of the major specialists in Britain is given in our Retail Index and Mail Order Index sections.

***Shipping dates** mentioned for North American titles are the dates copies leave their printers to be air-freighted to distributors for direct sale outlets approximately one week later. These dates and titles do not relate to on-sale dates or titles for news agent copies.*

The Marvel and DC titles on news trade distribution are on sale in the UK approximately two to three months after the air-freighted copies can be bought through specialist shops and mail order companies dealing with 'advance imports'. Because of the additional shipping costs incurred, these advance copies are sold at a higher price than the UK cover price.

***American dollar prices** are listed for US titles with most UK comic shops converting at the rate of 85p = $1.*

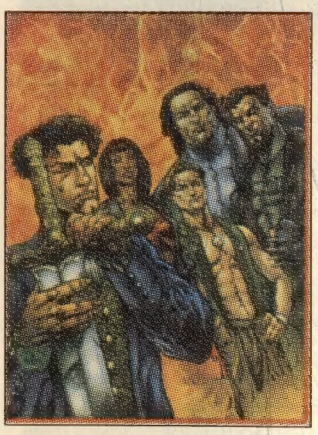
Most reputable mail order dealers bear a CoBRA seal on their advertisements. For full details concerning advertisers displaying this Mail Order Protection seal, see page 66.

The Acclaim reboot continues

FEBRUARY sees the introduction of two more new titles as Acclaim Comics continues its revamping of what was the Valiant Universe.

The first of these new titles — **Quantum and Woody** — introduces completely new characters. According to Acclaim it features "the world's *worst* superhero team" — former childhood friends Woodrow van Chelton and Eric (Quantum) Henderson, who are re-united by the deaths of their fathers.

Written by Christopher (**The Ray**) Priest, pencilled by Mark Bright and inked by Greg Adams, **Quantum and Woody** is claimed to be "unlike any superhero comic you have ever read!"



The second new title, **Eternal Warriors**, re-introduces the immortals of the former Valiant Universe — Aram (Armstrong), Gilad (the Eternal Warrior) and Ivar (the Timewalker) as well as Armstrong's former partner, Archer. These heroes join together in a quest to clear Ivar of the murder of yet another immortal.

Eternal Warriors is a 48-page quarterly title written by Hollywood screenwriter Art Holcomb. Art is by Douglas Tropea-Wheatley (pencils) and John Floyd (inks).

In March, Acclaim will launch a further two titles into its revamped Valiant Universe — one is a revival and the other features characters completely new to that universe.

The revived title is **Bloodshot**; written by Len Kaminski with art by Sal Velluto (pencils) and Jeff Albrecht (inks).

The premiere issue will introduce new opponents in the malevolent Simon Oreck, and the ultra-secret wetworks organisation, D.O.A.

Acclaim's new title for March is **Trinity Angels** which, according to the publishers, is what you get "when you mix a dash of *Charlie's Angels* with a dollop of *Ghostbusters* and your chef is John Woo at his Hong Kong cinema best".

The Trinity Angels are three typical Long Island sisters — Maria, Gianna and Theresa Barbella — who, one day, wake up wearing very funny costumes.

To add to their troubles, their minds are inhabiting even funnier bodies. They've also gained strange powers over sky, fire and earth; there's a headless body lying at their feet and strange monsters are chasing them.

How they changed, who changed them and why are all questions the sisters need to answer... and quickly!

Trinity Angels is written and pencilled by former **Justice League** and **JLInternational** penciller Kevin Maquire with Dan Panosian inking.

***Quantum and Woody** #1, priced $2.50, and **Eternal Warriors** #1, priced $3.95, ship in February.*

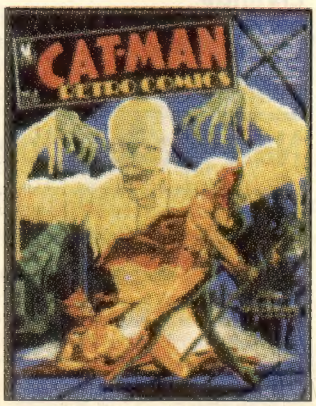
***Bloodshot** #1 and **Trinity Angels** #1, both priced $2.50, ship in March.*

*The **Azrael/Ash** one-shot re-unites Azrael co-creators Dennis O'Neil (story) and Joe Quesada (pencils) for the first time since the **Batman: Sword of Azrael** four-issue mini-series. Jimmy Palmiotti inks this 48-page prestige format title co-starring Quasada and Palmiotti's Event Comics character. Priced $4.95, it ships March 26th.*

AC Comics' retro Cat-Man

AC COMICS' Cat-Man stars in two new stories — written and drawn in the Golden Age style — in the 40-page black & white **Cat-Man Retro Comics** #0.

Not to be confused with the similarly-named Batman villain, this Golden Age character's first appearances were in the 1940 **Crash Comics** #4-5 before the title became **Cat-Man Comics** with #6.



It was published by Holyoke Publishing Co (5/41 on) and Continental Magazines (7/44 on) and ran for 32 issues (to 8/46). Among others, the title featured art by Joe Kubert — including his comic book debut, and L.B. Cole.

In **Cat-Man Retro Comics**, Cat-Man takes the spotlight in two related stories. The first, *Where the Mummy Walks!* by David Jacob Becket, is set in the 1940s and 1950s and features Catman's sidekick, Kitten, while the second continues the story of the mummy in contemporary times.

Also included is a story featuring Cat-Man, Kitten, and Yankee Girl as well as a reprint from the original **Cat-Man Comics** illustrated by Charles M. Quinlan.

A further bonus is a Yorko the Great tale by Will (**The Spirit**) Eisner.

***Cat-Man Retro Comics** #0, priced $5.95, ships in February.*

Moorcock's Elric returns to comics for Dark Horse/Topps

AFTER an absence of almost seven years, Michael Moorcock's eternal champion returns to comics in **Elric: Stormbringer**.

Taken from Moorcock's novel of the final battle between Law and Chaos, this new seven-part mini-series is adapted and illustrated by P. Craig Russell. It is being published by Dark Horse Comics as a co-production with Topps Comics.

Fact File: Russell and Elric

Michael Moorcock's albino warrior-king, Elric, first appeared in **Science Fantasy** magazine in 1961 and made his comics debut only a few years later.

That was in the pages of the obscure French magazine **Moi Aussi** with the stories interpreted by the renowned French illustrator Philippe Druillet. Those stories were reprinted as a portfolio in 1971 and in English in 1973.

Elric next appeared in comics in the black & white **Stormbringer**, published by Savoy Books in the early 1970s.

This 32-page book received only limited distribution but was drawn by Jim Cawthorn — Moorcock's frequent collaborator — who had provided the Elric covers for **Science Fantasy** and was, thus, largely responsible for Elric's image.

Mike Friedrich's "overground" title, **Star*Reach** carried Elric's first US comics appearance in 1976. An original story, it was written by Eric Kimball and drawn by Robert Gould.

This was later reprinted in the **Star*Reach Greatest Hits** trade paperback (1979) as was the third US Elric story. That was a 20-page tale — with art by Frank Brunner — which was published in **Heavy Metal** in that same year.

In between those two, Elric met Robert E. Howard's Conan in a two-part story spread across Marvel's **Conan the Barbarian** #14 & 15 (3/72 & 5/72) with art by Barry (Windsor) Smith.

P. Craig Russell's involvement with the character began in 1980 when Elric made his fourth US appearance — in issues 3 & 4 (Fall and Winter 1980) of Marvel's **Epic Illustrated**. Those issues included an adaptation of Moorcock's Elric short story, *The Dreaming City*. This adaptation was later reprinted and completed in the second **Marvel Graphic Novel** (1982).

Epic Illustrated #14 (10/82) showcased Russell's next Elric project — a version of another Moorcock short story, *While the Gods Laugh*.

After Marvel, the now defunct Californian distributor-turned-publisher Pacific Comics acquired the rights to Elric.

There Russell inked Michael T. Gilbert's pencils on the six-issue adaptation of Moorcock's (chronologically) first Elric novel, **Elric of Melnibone** (4/83 to 4/84). This story was subsequently collected by the also now defunct First Comics as **First Comics Graphic Novel #6** (5/86).

First had secured the rights to Elric following Pacific's closure and went on to publish four more adaptations of Moorcock's novels: **Elric: Sailor on the Seas of Fate** (7 issues 6/85 to 6/86), **Elric: Weird of the White Wolf** (5: 10/86 to 6/87), **Elric: The Vanishing Tower** (6: 8/87 to 6/88) and **Elric: The Bane of the Black Sword** (4: 8/88 to 6/89).

Russell's only Elric work for First appeared in **Weird of the White Wolf**. Issues two and three reprinted *While the Gods Laugh* (from **Epic Illustrated** #14).

Number two also included a new and much shorter adaptation of *The Dreaming City*.

***Elric: Stormbringer** #1, priced $2.95, ships on March 5th.*

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Alcala's Star Wars 20 years on

HAVING already reprinted all the Russ Manning and Al Williamson **Star Wars** newspaper strips, Dark Horse Comics continues its policy of making hard-to-find material readily available with Alfredo Alcala's newspaper strip adaptation of the late Brian Daley's novel, *Han Solo at Stars' End.*

Classic Star Wars: Han Solo at Stars' End is a three-issue mini-series. Shot directly from Alcala's original artwork, the strips have been reformated to suit publication as a comic book.

Alcala's newspaper strip adaptation of the novel has been out of circulation since it was first published.

Daley's book was first issued in 1979. It was only the second — following Alan Dean Foster's **Splinter of the Mind's Eye** (1978) — original novel based in George Lucas' *Star Wars* mythos to be published.

It was followed by two sequels; **Han Solo's Revenge** (1979) and **Han Solo and the Lost Legacy** (1980).

"After *Star Wars* came out," said **Classic Star Wars** editor Peet Janes, "I was a voracious consumer of all things *Star Wars*. Back then, however, new material was hard to come by, and we cheered every release, from Alan Dean Foster's **Splinter of the Mind's Eye** to Brian Daley's Han Solo novels."

"Every kid I knew was clipping out the comic strips of *Han Solo at Stars' End* and marvelling at the further adventures of Han Solo, Chewbacca, and the droids Bollux and Blue Max." He continued, "And now, here I am, almost 20 years later, and I'm cutting and pasting Alfredo Alcala's great adaptation again!"

***Classic Star Wars: Han Solo at Stars' End** #1, priced $2.95, ships on March 26th.*

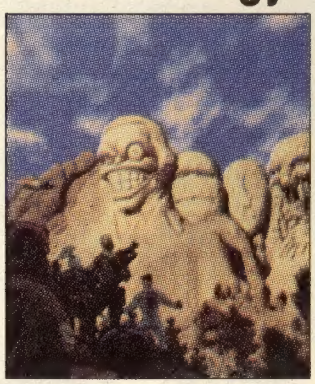
Dark Horse's new anthology

THE NEW 112-PAGE **Dark Horse Short-Story Collection** is a black & white trade paperback anthology covering Dark Horse Comics' 10 years of publishing.

The book features comic strips by many of the creators who helped establish Dark Horse's reputation as the publisher of the most diverse line of titles in the industry.

Complete with a new cover by Dave Gibbons, it covers a range of genres embracing adventure, horror, crime, fantasy, science fiction and the supernatural.

Dark Horse Short-Story Collection features work by a variety of creators connected to the company, among them Frank Miller, Mark Verheiden, Matt Wagner and Paul Chadwick.



Included are complete tales featuring Dark Horse regulars Predator, Concrete, Nexus, Aliens, The Mask and Sin City.

***Dark Horse Short-Story Collection** trade paperback, priced $12.95, ships on April 16th.*

US Marvel yearbooks: 1997

PUBLICATION of Marvel's annual giant-size issues begins early in 1997, with the first titles shipping in March.

After the severe contractions of 1995, the line has been expanded to include titles other than the regular Spider-Man and X-books but — as has been the case in the past two years — they will carry a suffix of **'97** rather than being numbered and dubbed "Annuals".

The initial launches are **Incredible Hulk '97** — written by Chris Cooper and Bill Roseman, drawn by Jeff Rebner and Kevin Lau. It guest stars Franklin, Artie and Leech from **Generation X** while **X-Men '97** — written by **X-Force's** John Francis Moore with art by Steve (**Team X/Team 7**) Epting — stars Gambit, Joseph and Phoenix.

***Incredible Hulk '97** and **X-Men '97**, both priced $2.99, ship on March 26th.*

X-Men's Beast goes it alone

HENRY "HANK" McCoy alias the Beast, founder member of both X-Men and X-Factor, is to get his first solo mini-series.

The new title — **Beast** — will be drawn by recent **X-Men** guest artist, Cedric Nocon and written by long-time comics artist and writer, Keith Giffen.

A former Avenger *and* Defender, the Beast has already had his own solo series — albeit within the pages of **Amazing Adventures** (volume II).

He has also featured in a previous mini-series — the four-issue **Beauty and the Beast** (1/85 to 4/85), in which he co-starred with another mutant, Dazzler.

The Beast's solo series in **Amazing Adventures** — written by (then) fan-favourite Steve Englehart and illustrated (for the most part) by Tom Sutton — ran for seven issues (#11: 4/72 to #17: 4/73).

It was in the first issue of this series almost 15 years ago that Hank McCoy was redesigned from Kirby's initial concept. From the human — if apelike — Beast, he transformed into the familiar blue fur covered animal-like appearance he has retained since.

***Beast** #1, cover priced $2.50, will ship on March 12th.*

Recollections: DC's fourth Books of Magic collection

ECHOING a tradition long-established in Europe, DC Comics is continuing to keep all of its significant storylines and major titles in print with trade paperback album editions.

Following the compilations of the original Neil Gaiman written mini-series, plus **Bindings** and **Summonings**, **Reckonings** is the fourth Vertigo collection for **The Books of Magic** title.

This compilation collects issues #14 to 20 under a new Michael Wm. Kaluta painted cover. Written by series regular John Ney Rieber, art is by Peter Gross, Peter Snejberg and John Ridgway.

***The Books of Magic: Reckonings** trade paperback, priced $12.95, ships on February 12th.*

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IN BRIEF

XXX collection

THE SEVEN-issue **Triple*X** mini-series (12/94 to 6/95) is to be collected into a 352-page trade paperback by Dark Horse Comics.

The mini-series was produced entirely by the Pander Brothers (Arnold and Jacob) who also worked on 1990's **Exquisite Corpse** for Dark Horse as well as illustrating the first 12 issues of the second Comico series of Matt Wagner's **Grendel** (10/86-9/87).

This trade paperback reprints the entire mini-series in black and white (as originally published).

Also included is a sketchbook containing the Pander Brothers' early design concepts and character development.

On the series, co-creator Arnold Pander posed the question: "Fear, retribution, sacrifice, social and political upheaval. How far would you go to change a world crumbling down around you?"

He continued, "We [Arnold and Jacob Pander] spent two years in Europe writing and drawing this action/suspense thriller. Our mission — to capture the soul of the streets and people who inhabit the world of **Triple*X**."

"A world not unlike our own," he concluded, with irony, "Crying out for change."

***Triple*X** trade paperback, priced $24.95, ships on March 12th.*

Second volume of Essential Wolverine

THE SECOND volume of the 512-page manga "phonebook" style **Wolverine** compilation consists of reprints of **Wolverine** #24 to 47 under a new cover by Adam Kubert.

Reproduced are stories by — among others — writers such as Peter David and Larry Hama and artists including John Buscema, Klaus Janson, Gene Colan, Tom Palmer, Dan Green, and Marc Silvestri.

All **Essential** volumes are reprinted in black and white.

***The Essential Wolverine** trade paperback volume 2, priced $12.99, ships on March 19th.*

Collected Masamune Shirow

DOMINION: Conflict 1 — No More Noise is the title of the latest Dark Horse Comics collection from **Ghost in the Shell** creator, Masamune Shirow.

This 160 page black and white reprint collects the entire mini-series as originally translated by the Studio Proteus team of Dana Lewis and Toren Smith.

***Dominion: Conflict 1 — No More Noise** trade paperback, priced $14.95, ships on March 19th.*

Spider-Man meets the original X-Men

SPIDER-MAN meets up with the original X-Men team of Cyclops, Beast, Iceman, the Angel and Marvel Girl in the continuing "under a buck" **Untold Tales of Spider-Man** #21.

This "retro-continuity implant", in which the younger Spider-Man and the X-Men are confronted by a new villain named Menace, is by the title's regular scripter, Kurt Busiek — writer of **Marvels** and **Astro City**. Art is by Pat Oliffe and industry veteran Al Williamson.

***Untold Tales of Spider-Man** #21, priced $0.99, ships on March 12th.*

Seventh new series for Ka-Zar

FOLLOWING his raised profile with the December shipping **Ka-Zar of the Savage Land**, Lord Kevin Plunder aka Ka-Zar gets another new title to call his own with the publication — in March — of the 40-page **Ka-Zar** #1.

This new ongoing series is set in the Savage Land, Marvel's "Lost World" or "Pellucidar" where pre-historic creatures still roam a region untouched by time or modern man. The supporting cast includes Ka-Zar's wife, Shanna the She-Devil, as well as his pet sabretooth tiger, Zabu.

In passing, it is worth noting that Ka-Zar's wife had her own short-lived Marvel series. **Shanna the She-Devil** lasted only five issues (12/72 to 8/73) while **Savage Tales** #8 to 10 (12/74 to 4/75) carried a Shanna back-up strip to its Ka-Zar lead stories.

The creative team for **Ka-Zar** consists of Mark Waid, acclaimed writer of DC Comics' **Kingdom Come, The Flash** and **Impulse** as well of Marvel's pre-*Heroes Reborn* **Captain America**. He is re-united with his former **X-Men** collaborator, artist Andy Kubert.

Issues #13-15 of **Sensational Spider-Man** will contain a three-part story leading into **Ka-Zar**.

For a history of Ka-Zar and his various series, see **Comics International** #74 page 14.

***Ka-Zar** #1, priced $1.95, ships on March 5th.*

New Aliens one-shot

THE LATEST addition to Dark Horse Comics' long line of Aliens one-shots and mini-series which established the company's high profile is the 32-page, self-contained title **Aliens: Pig**.

This new comic, scripted by **Detective Comics** and **Robin** writer Chuck Dixon, tells the story of how a gang of space pirates attempts to use an exploding porker to take out a nest of aliens(!). Said nest just happens to be on board a crashed ore tug which the scavengers want to loot for its valuable cargo.

Art is by Flint Henry, former artist on First Comics' **Grimjack** and DC's **Manbat** (DC).

Of **Aliens: Pig** and Henry, Dixon said, "I was attracted to this project because it provided another chance to work with Flint Henry — we're friends, and I'm possibly his biggest fan."

"We're both admirers of the *Aliens* movies," he continued. "And we've discussed them ad nauseam for hours on end."

"Flint's a natural for this material. His mastery of visceral horror and in-your-face imagery is a perfect match for Aliens," concluded Dixon.

***Aliens: Pig**, priced $2.95, ships on March 26th.*

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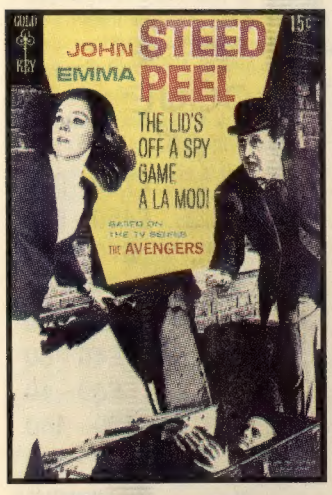

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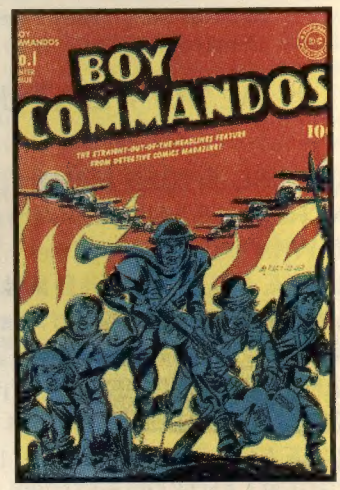

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INCOGNITO COMIC SHOP

Wonder Woman celebrates rebirth's 10th annniversary

CREATED by the inventor of the lie detector, William Moulton Marston — then writing as Charles Moulton — Wonder Woman made her first appearance almost exactly 55 years ago in **All Star Comics** 8. But 1997 sees the tenth anniversary of her "rebirth".

It was in February 1987 that DC published the first issue of the second and current series of **Wonder Woman**.

To mark the anniversary, DC is publishing **Wonder Woman** 120 as a special 48pg issue containing two separate stories.

The first story will be written and illustrated by series regular John Byrne, and will explore Wonder Woman's royal Amazonian history.

The 10-page back-up tale will focus on her decision to move from Boston to Gateway City to make a fresh start. This bonus story will be written by Ruth Morrison, with art by Jill (**The Sandman**) Thompson.

George Perez, who played such an important role as both writer and artist in the 1987 revival of Wonder Woman, will provide the cover artwork.

The issue will also include pin-ups by artistic luminaries such as Brian Bolland and Nick Cardy (**Bat Lash** and **Teen Titans**).

In addition to this special issue, DC will also be publishing a 128pg trade paperback collection, **Wonder Woman: Second Genesis**.

This will reprint **Wonder Woman** 101 to 105, the first John Byrne issues in which the writer-artist redefined the Amazonian Princess's character.

Byrne will provide a new cover and introduction to this volume, which features guest appearances from Jason Blood and the Phantom Stranger and introduces Cassandra Sandsmark, the new Wonder Girl.

***Wonder Woman** 120, priced $2.95, ships on February 26.*

*The **Wonder Woman: Second Genesis** trade paperback, priced $12.95, ships on February 5.*

The Hulk and Wolverine to feature in Marvel Chillers

MARVEL Chillers, Marvel Comics' line of illustrated novels for younger readers, is set to expand in March with the addition of two titles.

The first, featuring the Incredible Hulk, is written by the late Mark Gruenwald, and illustrated by British former Hulk creator Liam Sharpe.

Regular writer on the character's own title, Larry Hama produces a Wolverine solo story for the second in the series. No artist has as yet been announced.

***Marvel Chillers: The Hulk** and **Marvel Chillers: Wolverine**, both priced $2.99, ship on March 26.*

Fourth Moebius collection

FOLLOWING **Arzach, The Madwoman of the Sacred Heart** (with Alexandro Jodorowsky) and **The Man from the Ciguri**, Dark Horse offers its fourth compilation of work by the acclaimed French artist, Jean "Moebius" Giraud.

The Exotics, an 80pg volume, contains a selection of the artist's more unusual science fiction stories, including the prequel to **The Airtight Garage** and **The Man from the Ciguri**, along with the long out-of-print tale *The Horny Goof*.

***The Exotics** trade paperback, priced $7.95, ships on February 19.*

Anarky, Grant and Breyfogle

ONE OF Batman's most disturbing opponents, Anarky, is to return in a new four-issue series reuniting the critically-acclaimed **Batman: Shadow of the Bat** creators, Alan Grant and Norm Breyfogle.

Inker Josef Rubinstein joins the team for a tale about the amoral adventurer who believes that humankind is on the brink of cultural meltdown.

Anarky asserts that the old ways of thinking — about politics, law, economics and international relations — are irretrievably breaking down. Only a quantum leap to a radically new form of consciousness similar to that made by himself — suggests Anarky — can save the world from a disastrous future.

Anarky's concern for his fellow man — in particular the abused and downtrodden — leads him to formulate a plan that will enable the world to "advance" to his level.

Each issue of **Anarky** features the appearance of a guest-star who embodies an element of the lead character's philosophy.

In the series' debut issue, Anarky's attention is focused on the Demon, who represents madness and the loss of free will. The second issue features the most potent evil in the DC Universe, Darkseid. Issues 3 and 4 are centred on the fruition of Anarky's plans and his attempts to unleash his newfound knowledge on the citizens of Gotham City.

But can he achieve his object without attracting the attention of the Dark Knight?

***Anarky** #1, priced $2.50, ships on March 19.*

Cult-makers reunion special

HALL of Heroes, an American independent comics publisher which has made something of a name for itself by discovering new creative talents before they become household names, has re-united three of its most popular recent discoveries for a special one-shot title.

Hall of Heroes Presents 0 features three eight-page stories: *The Fuzz*, by Trent (**Creed**) Kaniuga; *Salamandroid*, by Ethan (**Cyberfrog**) Van Scriver and *Slingers*, by Matt (**Snowman**) Martin. All three creators had their first comics work published by Hall of Heroes.

The one-shot will be produced in three different cover versions, each featuring artwork by one of the artists.

Marvel Entertainment files for bankruptcy protection

With a US comics market share currently in excess of 30%, and such internationally-recognised properties as Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk and the X-Men, Marvel Comics should be a classic example of a buoyant entertainment industry leader. So, what went wrong?

MARVEL COMICS' parent group announced on December 27 that it was to seek protection under Chapter 11 of the US bankruptcy laws.

Marvel Entertainment explained that this move, not unexpected within the comics community, was being made to allow the corporation time to implement a financial restructuring plan.

The plan means refinancing Marvel Entertainment with $525 million of new investment. The intention, said Marvel, is that the business should continue without interruption and for all suppliers and employees to be paid in full and on time.

In order to implement the recapitalisation which will allow the company to get back on its feet, Marvel Entertainment filed a voluntary petition for restructuring with the US bankruptcy court in Wilmington, Va.

Filing of such petitions is common practice and means that companies can legally continue their commercial operation without obligation to pay outstanding debts from pre-Chapter 11 trading. It also allows industry bodies a supervisory role in the restructuring Chapter 11 corporations undertake and some immunity from outside litigation.

Special protector

Chapter 11 is a "special brand" of bankruptcy under American federal law, explained industry analyst Rod Underhill.

What it means, said Underhill, is that Marvel Entertainment cannot pay its debts and wishes to avoid lawsuits for debt collection which could sink the company. The federal court itself authorises a stop on all lawsuits against the company for monies owed.

Marvel Entertainment in turn will endeavour to work out a payment plan for the debts. That might be less than the full sum owed, and is calculated on the number of cents on the dollar returned against those invested. The federal judge is the final arbiter on levels of debt and investor repayments.

Roots of crisis

Marvel Entertainment asserted at the time of filing for Chapter 11 that such a move had been made necessary because of stockholders' failure to reach agreement regarding any alternative plans for the company's future.

As a result of the petition, Marvel will be able to complete its reorganisation without having to secure the shareholders' and bondholders' consent.

More than a month ago, the same bondholders were asked to support executives' plan to rescue the ailing group's performance by waiving restrictions relating to the bonds. The failure to reach agreement with bondholders delayed the implementation of a rescue, said the company.

But the row between shareholders has raised such acrimony that the group's executives and management have found themselves during recent weeks the unwilling focus of financial and public scrutiny.

Marvel: We want to get on with it

Scott Sasa, Marvel Entertainment's chairman and chief executive officer, said: "We would have preferred to re-capitalise Marvel without having to seek the aid of the court, but the actions and positions taken by the bondholders prevented that approach.

"The key to putting Marvel on track for a dynamic and profitable future is a quick resolution to this situation, and we want to get on with it." he said.

Sasa was upbeat about Marvel's ability to meet its obligations and carry on trading. "We intend to pay all of our bills, including those submitted prior to the filing, on time and in full, and maintain normal credit terms with our suppliers and licensors.

"We expect to continue doing business with our customers and licensees under normal business terms. We will fund and move forward with all of our new strategic investments, and employees will be paid in full and on time. We will gain a valuable new asset in Toy Biz Inc and new funds that will allow us to face the future with strength and confidence."

"The recapitalisation plan represents a strong vote of confidence by our principal shareholder and lender group [Ronald Perelman] in the fundamental strength and promise of the Marvel brand, our creative properties, business partners, licensing relationships, and strategic initiatives," said Sassa.

Marvel's strategic investment program remains unchanged, and includes Marvel Studios' development of television and film properties, Marvel Mania theme restaurants, Marvel Interactive software and Fleer/SkyBox trading card initiatives.

By the numbers

Under the proposed financial restructuring plan Andrews Group, a Perelman holding company, will invest $365 million in new equity to make Toy Biz a wholly-owned subsidiary of Marvel.

Marvel's financiers have agreed to provide $160 million in new funds to finance the company's new investment strategy and provide working capital. The board of directors has voted to approve the plan.

In conjunction with the Chapter 11 filing, a group led by Chase Manhattan Bank has agreed to provide Marvel with $100 million of debtor-in-possession (DIP) financing.

With court approval, which is expected shortly, this money will ensure that the group has sufficient cash to pay all current and expected trade and employee obligations, and to meet all of its operating and investment needs during the restructuring.

Publicly the company has said that it expects reorganisation to be completed within a few months. There is no guarantee, however, that such a process will be completed successfully.

Family effects

In common with Marvel Comics, the companies engaged in the group's publishing, licensing, distribution and trading-card businesses have filed individual Chapter 11 petitions.

Marvel Entertainment's filing does not include the Panini subsidiary, which is based in Italy.

Panini has shown an operating profit each year since its acquisition by Marvel and will continue to function independently, unaffected events in the US. Marvel's Restaurant Ventures affiliate is also excluded from the trip to federal court.

Toy Biz continues as an independent, publicly traded, New York stock exchange-listed company. Its operations remain uniquely unaffected among the US properties by Marvel's Chapter 11 petition.

After Chapter 11

The major consideration, suggested Rob Underhill, was whether Marvel Entertainment makes it through the Chapter 11 restructuring.

If not, Underhill thought, Marvel would be forced into full bankruptcy. It would be forced to sell off all its prime assets: Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, Hulk and the X-Men, to the highest bidders.

Underhill's analysis of Marvel Comics' outlook was that a reduction in the number of titles could be expected, as could even more layoffs.

"I would imagine that this sad event will affect all publishers," said Underhill. "Marvel was our powerhouse ... and if they can't make it in today's market then all publishers are in trouble. DC has

WHAT IT ALL MEANS...

Has Marvel gone out of business? No, it is continuing.

Will its comics stop? No, the company is protected from its debts and is allowed to continue trading.

Will there be any skip months? No. It would not be in the company's interest to skip a single week, let alone a month.

So, what has happened? Marvel's debts were greater than its assets. It could not afford to pay all of its bills. Chapter 11 prevents the risk of any creditors closing the company down by demanding full payment. Under Chapter 11 bankruptcy, Marvel is protected, for up to five years, against old debts, provided it pays all of its (post-Chapter 11 declaration) bills.

had a great lowering of sales, too, down some 72% on major titles, as per **Time Magazine** a couple of weeks ago."

Possible plan Bs

Could so-called "independent" titles fill the gap created by the collapse of Marvel Comics? "Not in the traditional 14-year-old to 20-year-old market," said Underhill. "This may well be the death knell of the comic industry as we know it."

He continued, "Love Marvel or hate Marvel, when the biggest major publishers cannot make a living putting **Spider-Man** et al out then the industry has a major problem."

Where did it all go wrong?

On the question of whether Marvel's moribund condition was of its own making Underhill was emphatic. "Yes, Marvel caused a great deal of this to happen, but I believe that its business decisions of the last few years were prompted by changes in our industry, negative changes that were affecting the numbers of purchases across the board.

"But if one thinks that Marvel's current crisis was brought about by mismanagement internally, this does not explain the tough time that DC is having, nor the tough times that retailers are having," said Underhill.

"The best thing that can happen, frankly, is for Marvel to make it through Chapter 11 successfully. If it does, it will be because a major upswing in comic sales occurs almost immediately. This is doubtful when one looks at current trends."

But Underhill could offer no explanation of the crisis in the wider comics industry. "How did it happen after 50 years of success? I've read interesting guesses, but nobody seems to really know."

An industry insider, however, had a very different perspective. "Marvel can and is making money publishing comics", he said. "Marvel cannot, however, become a cash cow for Ron Perelman.

"I am convinced that if Marvel were given full autonomy to operate as a comic-book company, if they were allowed the freedom to rebuild an audience devastated by decisions forced on Marvel from on high, they could recover a lot of that audience and rebuild themselves.

"Under Perelman, Marvel has become a source of profits with no investments for the future, and that's the problem."

"Marvel has no money for promotions; Marvel has no money for goodwill; Marvel has no money for advertising; Marvel has no money to do anything adequately", he continued. "And yet their comics are, for the most part, making money for them, at least in our market.

"I know that their sales figures say they lost money on publishing this year, but a lot of that was due to expensive forays into other marketplaces: Wal-Mart, where they produced a **Goose-bumps** comic we have yet to see; phenomenal distribution costs, the bad decision to purchase Malibu and then shut it down, and so on."

He concluded, "If you just look at the costs to operate Marvel Comics and the revenue produced by Marvel Comics, they're profitable."

Industry forecast

For the future, Underhill said: "Keep an eye on DC and see how they react. They have some of the best business minds in the world advising them via their parent company, Warner Bros."

He continued "Indies should consider bringing colour versions out now to fill the short-term gap left by the impending slowing of Marvel, in the hopes of increasing market share."

However, he noted, "This would probably not be a successful gambit in the long run ... Can the market totally change from four-colour teen interest mags to the much more literary indie fare?

"For the future," he suggested, "consider licensing Marvel characters on a shared percentage basis ... This might help Marvel bring in needed capital."

On the downside, "Marvel might foolishly wish to get big dollars for their characters now, but who would pay that? Perhaps DC, but I wonder if DC would be willing to write big cheques for Marvel characters during this time of declining sales."

From the front line

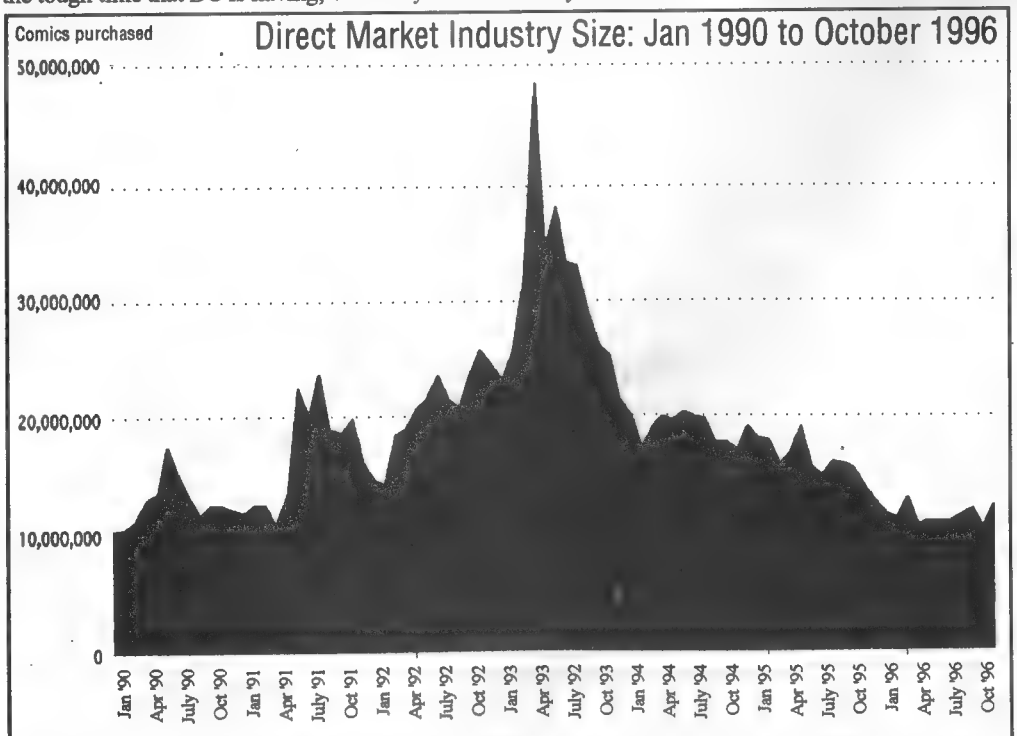
Owner of the UK Wonderworld chain David Hern expressed the sentiment of many retailers when he commented, "I think this is the best thing that could have happened. They [Marvel] needed a sharp kick, and I can't imagine anything less major that would electify the company out of its headlong race for self-destruction."

Acclaim adds to industry's woes

ACCLAIM Comics reported on December 17 a loss of $3.28 a share, $162 million against a $0.11 per share profit ($6.1 million) in the previous year.
The company has violated its loan covenants and its auditors, KPMG Peat Marwick LLP, say that there are substantial doubts about the company's ability to "continue as a going concern".
As a result, Acclaim's shares now stand at $4.00, down 37%, and the company is involved in talks with lenders to obtain waivers and restructure debts.

... and Milestone makes three

Milestone Comics, published and distributed by DC, came into being in April 1993 with **Blood Syndicate** and **Hardware**.
Despite its ability to attract capable if not "name" creators for its black, Asian and Hispanic superhero comics, Milestone was never able to rise above its small beginnings. Now, less than three years later, its last three titles are to be cancelled. Final issues of **Hardware** (#51), **Icon** (#45), and **Static** (#47) will ship in March.
The company will not, however, disappear entirely as it will be working on some book projects for Hyperion, a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Co.



Getting it in proportion: The above figures show the quantity of comics purchased by specialist retailers across the last six years. Possibly the most extraordinary period in the history of the industry, it shows tremendous peaks above the average of around 13 million units in 1990. These peaks were caused in 1990 by the July 2.5 million launch of **Spider-Man #1**. In 1991, **X-Force #1** and **X-Men #1** were launched in July and August. Spring 1992 saw the massive launch of Image Comics, leading to the huge summer glut of product and enhanced covers attracting the now-departed speculator market. While 1996 looks poor in comparison with the mid-'90s, it can be seen as a return to the pre-boom norm of 1990.

IN BRIEF

Savage Dragon: Off the leash again

ERIK LARSEN is once more allowing his creation to be let loose in others' hands in a new Image title, **The Savage Dragon: Red Horizon**.

This three-issue series is written and drawn by industry newcomer Mike Miller.

***The Savage Dragon: Red Horizon** 1, priced $2.50, ships in February.*

Dark Horse Monsters

DARK Horse is releasing a 32pg one-shot, **Dark Horse Monsters**, reprinting four tales of space creatures, dinosaurs and other giant beasts from the pages of past issues of **Dark Horse Presents**.

With a cover by Bob Eggleton, **Dark Horse Monsters** includes work by Timothy Truman, Chris Warner and Jack Pollock.

***Dark Horse Monsters**, priced $2.95, ships on February 5.*

Marvel covers all

IN MARCH, Marvel Comics will begin a "two for two" policy in which a regular and variant cover will appear on issue two of every new ongoing series.

The first title likely to benefit from this policy will be **Thunderbolts**, the second issue of which will carry a variant cover by the regular artistic team of Mark Bagley and Vince Russell. According to Marvel, the same issue will reveal the team's hidden secret.

***Thunderbolts** 2, priced $1.95, ships on March 12 (variant) and March 19 (regular cover).*

Seekers discover their goal

ONCE thought to be a potential replacement for its Vertigo imprint flagship title, **The Sandman**, DC's **Seekers: Into the Mystery** is now to be cancelled at issue 15.

The final issue will be written by J.M. DeMatteis with interior and cover artwork by Jon J. Muth.

***Seekers: Into the Mystery** 15, priced $2.95, ships on February 5.*

Sergio Aragones on Usagi Yojimbo

CREATOR Sergio Aragones, the frequent, long-time contributor to humour periodical **MAD** and originator of Groo, among many other credits, is returning to comics with **Usagi Yojimbo** 10.

This special stand-alone issue features three stories — one inked by Aragones — which answer many of the questions about the samurai rabbit — including how he came to be a ronin.

Creator Stan Sakai provides the story and remaining art for the series, whose lead character first appeared in **Albedo** 1 (Thoughts and Images 4/1985).

***Usagi Yojimbo** 10, priced $2.95, ships on February 26.*

What if Black Knight met Doctor Doom?

MISSING Avenger the Black Knight turns up in issue 97 of **What If...?**, Marvel Comics' long-running alternate worlds series.

In a story after the fall of Camelot, written by James Felder and illustrated by Leonardo Manco, Doctor Doom has seized control of England, and is now in a position to change history irreversibly.

Only the Black Knight, naturally enough, can stop him.

What If...? 97, priced $1.95, ships on March 12.

Kids' TV animates DC Universe

DC IS expanding its line based on the animated TV characters in February with the addition of **Adventures in the DC Universe**.

Although its companion titles — **Batman and Robin Adventures** and **Superman Adventures** — are spin-offs from TV series, the new comic is a speculative publication inspired by the success of the earlier two.

When publishers began focusing on potential adult markets some years ago the much-used publicity line was: "Comics aren't just for kids anymore". Now attention is again fixed on children, and TV adaptations offer an ideal route to them.

DC's response has been to launch **Adventures in the DC Universe**. The two earlier books were well received by adults and children, and the company's confidence in the **Adventures** format is such that it feels another comic will sell through association with the Batman and Superman series — even without a TV series to back it.

The new book will be a spotlight title and could include all or any of the DC characters.

The first issue will feature the new Justice League of America line-up of Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman and J'Onn J'Onzz — the Martian Manhunter.

In a story written by series regular Steve (**The Simpsons**) Vance, the team battles a new opponent who can control others' minds and who has taken over some of the leading super-criminals in the Universe. Among his conquests are the Parasite, the Scarecrow, the Cheetah, Dr Light, Major Disaster, Blockbuster and Gorilla Grodd.

With issue two, the series settles into its regular format of a 15-page lead feature with a seven-page back-up tale.

The main story will focus on one of DC's major superheroes, such as Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, the Flash, or Aquaman, with a secondary strip based on another character, major or minor.

Animation artist John Delaney will be the regular penciller for the series. Delaney, who DC considers "a master of completely cool character design" has announced that his goal is to draw all the DC characters.

Completing the creative team will be the **Legion of Super-Heroes** inker, Ron Boyd.

***Adventures in the DC Universe** 1, priced $1.75, ships on February 12.*

New showcase title at Image

WILDSTORM Spotlight is a new showcase title to be published by Image Comics.

A unique blend of **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight** and **Gen[13] Bootleg**, this all-new series will spotlight various characters from Wildstorm Studios' corner of the Image Universe in distinct story arcs.

Different creative teams — including some of the top names in the industry — will be responsible for each arc.

Issue one will feature Majestic in a story written by Alan (**Supreme**) Moore and pencilled by Carlos D'Anda; an inker has yet to be assigned to the project.

***Wildstorm Spotlight** #1, priced $2.50, ships on February 12th.*

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Return of the elusive Casper

CASPER the Happy Ghost, star of the 1995 film produced by Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, is set to make a return to comics.

In March Marvel Comics is to resurrect the youthful wraith in a 48pg magazine-sized special, entitled **Harvey Presents: Casper**.

Created in 1945 by Seymour V. "Sy" Reit and Joe Oriolo, the Friendly Ghost's first appearances were as an animated character.

It wasn't until 1949 that he made the transition to comics in **Casper the Friendly Ghost** 1, published by (St John Publishing, 9/1949). It was also the first time that the name Casper had been applied to him.

St John published five issues of the title before selling it to Harvey Publications (later Harvey Comics), which produced its first **Casper** comics in October 1952.

Since then, Casper has appeared in hundreds of comics, spawning several spin-off titles and appearing in his own animated TV series during the Fifties and Sixties.

The 1995 live-action film has raised public awareness of the character to all-time highs.

***Harvey Presents: Casper** 1, priced $1.50, ships on March 12.*

Steamy times for Femforce

LAUREN Mason, better known as Yankee Girl, is the central character in a new AC Comics title, **Time Storm: A Femforce Graphic Novel**.

Time Storm features 24 pages of new material by Heike, Roberts and Allen, in which Yankee Girl is projected 40 years into the future. There she must confront her old foe, Divine Wind, who has stolen a weapon that she plans to use on the past.

Also included in this volume is a wealth of information on Yankee Girl, including her origin, material on the Golden Age and AC versions and a reprint of a Golden Age Yankee Girl story.

This 84-page, black and white book sports a painted cover by Brad Gorby.

***Time Storm: A Femforce Graphic Novel**, priced $9.95, ships in February.*

Aliens vs Predator revisited

REISSUED as one of its **Classics** series, Dark Horse Comics is again publishing the first **Aliens versus Predator** mini-series (orignally published June 1990 to December 1990).

Originally a five-part series (with an issue 0 added later to reprint the series prelude from **Dark Horse Presents** 34 to 36), this latest edition of the series will run to six monthly issues.

When first published, **Aliens versus Predator** — by Randy Stradley (story) and Phil Norwood and Karl Story (art) — was the biggest-selling comic ever produced by an independent comics publisher.

The cover for the reprinted first issue will be provided by Michael Dubisch.

■ Dark Horse continues its remastering of its Aliens back catalogue with the **Aliens: Genocide** trade paperback.

This 112-page collection of the four-issue series, written by Mike Richardson and John Arcudi and illustrated by Damon Willis and Karl Story, includes full-colour art, an updated script and an Aliens art gallery, all under a new John Bolton cover.

***Dark Horse Classics: Aliens versus Predator** 1, priced $2.95, ships on February 19. **Aliens: Genocide** trade paperback (remastered), priced $16.95, ships on March 5.*

Delano's 2020 vision at Vertigo

VERTIGO's new 12-issue series, **2020 Visions**, is writer Jamie Delano's concept of a future "where all our worst nightmares have come true".

In four three-issue story arcs it chronicles the history of four generations of Americans striving to survive the post-millennial chaos of the Disunited States of America.

The arcs — each readable as stand-alone stories — offer a coast-to-coast tour of a near-future American culture contorted by strange plagues, renegade biotechnology, secessionist militias, sexual confusion — and weird weather.

The series opens in the year 2020 with a disturbing tale of urban horror set in economically divided, disease-ridden New York. Inhabitants are divided into two classes: the wealthy technocrats who live high-rise lifestyles and the workless underclass, who eke out an existence in the dog-eat-dog underbelly of the Big Apple.

The first story-arc is illustrated by fan favourite Frank Quitely. The second, beginning in **2020 Visions** 4 and featuring the art of Warren (**Mobfire**) Pleece, is a dystopian tale about the crime families of Florida.

James Romberger draws issues 7 to 9, which are set in the militia country of Montana. Steve Pugh illustrates the final story, located in a quake-shaken, sexually confused Los Angeles.

***2020 Visions** is a 12-issue Vertigo series featuring John Eder montage covers throughout. The first issue ships on March 19 and retails for $2.25.*

Top Cow and Dynamic Forces team up for new fan club

AFICIONADOS of Top Cow Comics will be heartened by the news that the Californian division of Image Comics has teamed up with specialist marketing company Dynamic Forces for a fan club.

This joint venture offers club members exclusive access to comics-related merchandise produced by Dynamic Forces. Members will receive a quarterly newsletter featuring interviews with Top Cow's creators and information on future Top Cow publishing projects.

Special membership, costing $19.95, entitles members to one-off offers such as limited-run variant covers and leather-bound collections; regular membership, at $5.95, includes the newsletter and some mini-prints.

Wagner's new Paradox thriller

IS SELF-reinvention possible? That is the question posed in **A History of Violence**, the new graphic novel from Graphic Mystery, a subdivision of the DC imprint, Paradox Press.

When a couple of thugs walk into Tom McKenna's small-town diner, they are looking to score some quick cash. Instead, they find themselves on the end of a serious beating from the proprietor.

A respected citizen and family man, Tom instantly becomes a local hero. But the unexpected media attention attracts a group of New York gangsters who happen to be passing through the area.

One of them believes that Tom once called himself Joey, and lived in Manhattan. As a teenager, Joey took action against one of gangland's most sadistic killers.

Now, 20 years later, the killer comes looking for vengeance. McKenna is forced to confront his violent past to protect himself and his family.

This 296-page story is written by **Judge Dredd** co-creator John Wagner and illustrated by **Deadworld** creator Vincent Locke who, among his other work, also has several issues of **The Sandman** to his credit.

Scottish-born Wagner has worked in the comics business for many years. His work has appeared in many British publications, although he has had relatively little published in the United States.

Among his US credits, however, are the first two **Batman/Judge Dredd** crossovers, **Chain Gang War** for DC Comics and Kitchen Sink's recent **The Crow: Dead Time** mini-series.

He is currently working on a forthcoming addition to Paradox Press's **The Big Book of...** series.

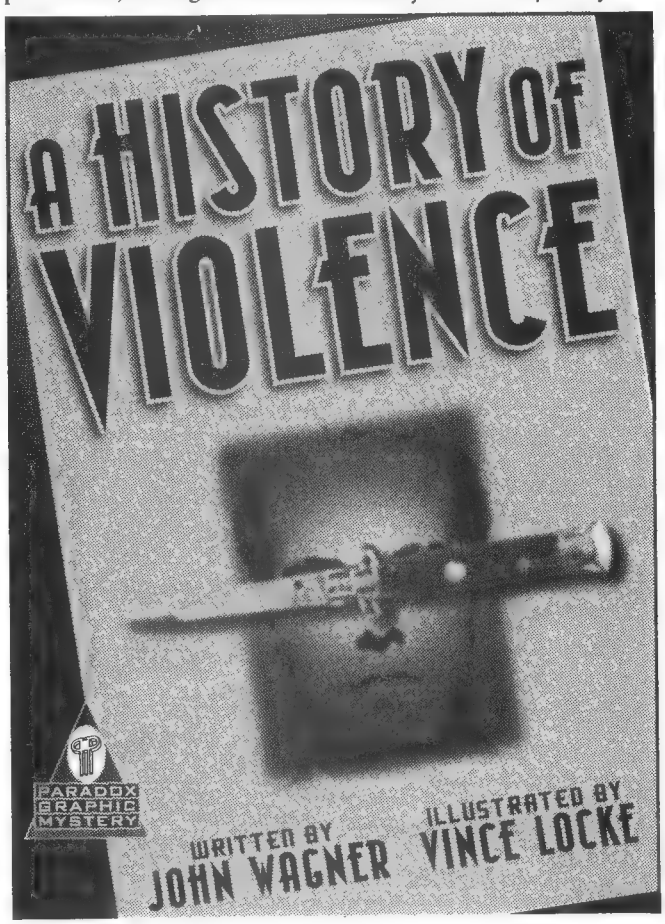
A History of Violence is the first single volume of original material to be published by Paradox's subdivision. All previous titles from Graphic Mystery have been issued first as mini-series.

Also from Graphic Mystery is the trade paperback collection of the three-issue **Green Candles** series. This was one of the most successful titles from Paradox Press in 1996.

The 296pg **Green Candles** is written by novelist Tom (*Freaks Amour* and *Derby Dugan's Depression Funnies*) DeHaven and illustrated by Robin Smith, former **2000AD** art editor and co-creator of The Bogey Man.

Both books are in the 5.5 x 8" Paradox trade format and printed in black and white. They will be co-published by Pocket Books and Paradox Press, with both companies issuing separate editions.

A History of Violence and Green Candles, both priced $9.95, ship on February 20 and 12 respectively.



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*Above: Meet Bomandi, the Last Boy on Earth, a prehistoric Lobo as rendered by artists Carl Critchlow and Mark Propst. In their scenario, it is the dawn of time, human life has just begun ... and standing in the mists of the past is the Primitive Main Man. **Lobo 38** is written by Alan Grant, and retails for $2.25, shipping on February 20.*

IN BRIEF

New TV adaptation breaks 99c barrier

MARVEL's new comic in its raft of titles adaptated from animated television series will retail at $1.50 instead of the usual 99c.

Marvel Adventures' first issue spotlights the Hulk and is written by Ralph Macchio, the current scripter of **The X-Men Adventures**. Macchio is joined by Andy Kuhn and Rob Stull to present an out-of-continuity tale featuring the green-skinned behemoth. It ships on February 12.

Bone alone again

AFTER publishing **Bone** under the Image Comics banner for the last 18 months, Cartoon Books founder Jeff Smith has announced that **Bone** is to leave the Image umbrella and resume independent publication.

"We went to Image when the future of the distribution industry was quite uncertain," Smith explained.

"Since distribution has consolidated, Cartoon Books' original reasons for moving to Image have evaporated."

He continued, "Looking forward, we realised that it made the most sense for us to once again consolidate all of the **Bone** comic-book projects at Cartoon Books.

"By taking absolute control over the **Bone** comic book, we can once again have all of our diverse products together under a single banner." The **Bone: Encore Edition** reprints, however, will remain under the Image banner until issue 21.

Image's executive director, Larry Marder, added: "**Bone**'s presence forever changed the comic-book community's perception of our company. We wish them well."

Bone returns to the Cartoon Books banner with issue 28, on sale March (—see *Movers & Shakers* this issue).

A Marvel Valentine

MARVEL Comics' latest holiday gift to a beleaguered retail community is the **Marvel Valentine's Special**.

Marvel describes this 48pg one-shot, written by Mark Waid, Tom DeFalco and Tom Peyer, as "two-fisted romance". This — with the fact that the stories feature Spider-Man, Cyclops and Phoenix, the Hulk and others — is all the information offered to retailers to order against.

The book was scheduled to ship in just over two months' time at the time of solicitation, but no artistic teams had at that time been assigned.

Marvel's Valentine Special, priced $2.95, ships on February 5.

Classics strategy at Acclaim

ACCLAIM's new **Classics Illustrated Study Guides**, aimed at schoolgoers, offer a crash-course awareness of books often used in English literature classes.

The company sees its educational titles as part of an "outreach programme" designed to bring new readers — and consequently increased sales — to the industry by appealing to a non-traditional marketing base.

Each 64-page digest-sized edition reprints one of the original **Classics Illustrated** comics together with new cover artwork and an essay analysing the backgrounds of the characters and themes of the books and examining each author's influences. The reprinted strips are being recoloured as well as reformatted for the smaller size.

The history of **Classics Illustrated** is lengthy and complex; the original series, however, was published in America from 1941 to 1971.

There were many foreign editions, with a British series (1953-1962) reprinting US material and originating stories, including an adaptation of Ian Fleming's James Bond thriller, *DrNo* (158A), originally intended to be one of the Dell **Movie Classics** series. A completely different adaptation found its way into America a year later in **Showcase** 43, published by DC.

The new Acclaim series will be the second attempt to revive **Classics Illustrated**, with First Comics having published 27 film adaptations between February 1970 and June 1991.

The First series (co-produced with Berkeley Books in a perfect-bound graphic-novel format intended for bookshop distribution) was short-lived because the artists, including Bill Sienkiewicz, Rick Geary and Kyle Baker, drew in styles fashionable with comic fans but lacking the accessibility for a wider audience that was the original series' greatest strength.

*Acclaim's **Tom Sawyer** (Twain), **A Tale of Two Cities** (Dickens), **Jane Eyre** (Brontë), **Romeo & Juliet** (Shakespeare), **Huckleberry Finn** (Twain), **Hamlet** (Shakespeare), **Crime & Punishment** (Dostoyevsky) and **The Odyssey** (Homer), all priced $4.99, are on sale now.*

Re-introducing Lords of Misrule

THE LORDS of Misrule is a new six-issue series published by Dark Horse Comics. The series was originally commissioned by the now defunct Tundra UK, the company financed by Kevin **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** Eastman. As co-creator Dan (**Force Works**) Abnett remarked, "It has languished in development hell for the past three years!"

The Lords of Misrule was conceived by Abnett with John (**2000AD**) Tomlinson and Steve (**Dreadlands**) White as an on-going series for Tundra, to follow the one-shot **Lords of Misrule**, published in March 1993.

Although this one-shot — written by Tomlinson, illustrated by Gary (**Punisher**) Erskine and with a cover by Simon Bisley — featured none of the main characters, it stood as a scene-setter to the aborted series.

Erskine, Abnett and White also worked on the **Pale Horses** series for the ill-fated UK/US publisher. Following Tundra's demise, **Pale Horses** was intended for Marvel's Epic imprint, which also fell victim to changes in the market.

"As they were doing nothing with **Pale Horses**," Abnett said, "I spent the last six months trying to get the rights back from Epic. With any luck, we should have a new publisher for the series in the near future."

Regarding **The Lords of Misrule**, co-creator Tomlinson said, "Dan Abnett, Steve White, and Peter Snejbjerg are three of the most easygoing, well-adjusted men you could wish to meet. I, similarly, am a joy to all who know me (ask anyone). How, then, shall we explain **The Lords of Misrule**, a bleak, white-knuckle horror story in which many people die? Quotes about the skull beneath the skin and the dark corners of the human psyche seem inevitable."

Artwork for the series is provided by Peter Snejbjerg, current artist on **The Books of Magic** for DC Comics' Vertigo imprint while John Higgins provides a wraparound painted cover on the first issue.

The Lords of Misrule 1, priced $2.95, is scheduled to ship this month.

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Shipping dates given are usually one week before airfreight copies arrive with your retailer/mail order supplier. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers. Late shipping, cancellations and changes in content will be detailed in future issues of ***Comics International****.*

Compiled by Phil Hall

Key to abbreviations used:

1 & 2 + 3	=	*Writer & penciller + inker*
b&w	=	*black & white content*
hbk	=	*hardback (book) edition*
tpbk	=	*trade paperback, squarebound, comic size*
Xpg	=	*number of interior pages*

All comics are 32 page colour titles unless stated otherwise

SHIPPING:

FEB - MARCH

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

☐ **Cerebus 215** (Dave Sim & Gerhard) *Guys, Part 15* (of 19). Cerebus continues to wrestle with his ego until Mrs Thatcher shows up and decides to "straighten him out". b&w $2.25

AC COMICS

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Cat-Man Retro Comics 0** (various) Repackaged Golden Age superhero tales. b&w 40pg. Cover by Will Eisner . . . $5.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Femforce: Time Storm** (Paul Roberts + Brad Gorby & Mark Heike) A mixture of Golden Age reprint and modern stories unveil the origin of Yankee Girl. 84pg b&w . $9.95

ACADEMY COMICS LTD

☐ **CyberKnights 2** (John & Jason Waltrip) Can the CyberKnights recover the crystals before Darkwell learns their deadly secret? b&w $2.95

ACCLAIM COMICS

☐ **Armed & Dangerous: When Irish Eyes Are Dying 3** (Bob Hall) Mitch Donovan is in the middle of a really big mess in Dublin and he has no one to turn to for aid. b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **Eternal Warriors 1** (Art Holcombe & Doug Wheatley + John Floyd) (Re)introducing Gilad, Ivar and Aram (Armstrong) to the Acclaim Universe in a new series of quarterly adventures. The immortal brothers are reunited to face the threat of a creature that can kill gods. 48pg $3.95

☐ **Magnus 2** (Tom Peyer & Mike McKone + Mark McKenna) Introducing Damon Angel, a rich technocrat with more power than the Illuminati, who has good reason to hate Magnus. . . $2.50

☐ **Ninjak 4** (Kurt Busiek & Neil Vokes + Michael Avon Oeming) Denny Meechum faces a major turning point in his career as a superhero. $2.50

NEW ☐ **Quantum and Woody 1** (Christopher Priest & Mark Bright + Greg Adams) Two childhood friends, who haven't seen each other for 15 years, are reunited and then "united" in a bizarre experiment which inextricably links the two of them with a superhuman ability. $2.50

☐ **Quantum Leap 2** (of 3; Bill Messner-Loebs & Javier Saltares) Based on the hugely successful TV series. $2.50

☐ **Shadowman 4** (Garth Ennis & Ashley Wood) Zero's back from Deadside and is on a collision course with Tommy Lee Jones. Concluding the first story arc of the series. $2.50

☐ **Troublemakers 3** (Fabian Nicieza & Kenny Martinez) Jane has a problem. Her powers could destroy the world and she is unable to control them. . . $2.50

☐ **X-O Manowar 5** (Mark Waid + Brian Augustyn & Scot Eaton + Pam Eklund) Donovan Wylie is forced into battling an evil entity that can control technology, turning it against those using it. A major problem for a man whose superhero career depends on technology. . $2.50

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☐ **Axis Mundi 2** (Carney & Marshall) It's BIG trouble for Axis Mundi as he faces a plethora of Axis clones and the big power of Big Big Man. b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **Lust For Life 1** (Jeff LeVine) Stories about friendship, donuts, truth, love, drinking, cross-country train trips and punk rock! 24pg b&w $2.95

☐ **Mister Blank 1** (Christopher Hicks) Sam Smith has bitten off more than he can chew and now faces a stand-off against terrorists assaulting his office on the 125th floor. 24pgs b&w $2.95

☐ **Rogue Satellite Comics 3** (John Reilly & Orwan Atkinson) The return of the Oz Squad and an Elvira 2010 back-up strip. 24pg b&w $2.95

☐ **Skeleton Key 20** (Andi Watson) Continuing the series of self-contained stories. 16pg b&w $1.75

ANTARCTIC PRESS

NEW ☐ **Addam Omega 1** (Bill Hughes) Officer Manhattan has a swarm of aliens about to descend on her city and only the massive android vigilante, Addam Omega, can help. The problem is, they hate each other! b&w $2.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Amazing Adventures of Professor Jones 4** (of 4; Atelier Lana) Parody of *Indiana Jones*. Jones and crew head off for a confrontation with Quetzacoatl in the Yucatan. $2.95

☐ **Box Office Poison 3** (Alex Robinson) Sherman and Dorothy slip up to the roof for some "private" time, unaware that their display of affection soon becomes very public. b&w Mature. $2.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Fantastic Panic Vol 2 #10** (of 10; Satoru Yamasaki) All Eiko is concerned about now is the recovery of the Tiger Jewel. b&w 40pg $3.50

☐ **Furrlough 50** (various) Special anniversary edition celebrating the longest running modern anthropomorphic title. 48pg $3.95

☐ **Gold Digger 35** (Fred Perry) *Time Warp* continues as Dr Peachbody is about to reveal his ultimate weapon. b&w . . $2.95

☐ **Hepcats 3** (Martin Wagner) Reprinting the critically-acclaimed series, plus the second instalment of the new back-up strip which acts as a prologue for the next series. Mature. . $2.95

NEW ☐ **Judgment Prawns 1** (of 4; Patrick Charon Cabana & Jean-Sebastien Duberger + Pierre-Andre Dery) War is hell, especially when you're fighting someone else's war. Gaijin, a killer prawn, finds himself thrown in the middle of a battle not of his own making. b&w $2.95

☐ **Lillith, Demon Princess 3** (Barry Layga & Shawn Atkinson) Lillith has reached the Temple of Flight, but something is stopping her from going any further. If she is to overcome her fears, first she must overcome this threat. $2.95

☐ **Magical Mates 8** (of 9; Mio Odagi) Seika's plot to rig the student elections has failed, but Eiji is still on the loose using his magic computer to create explosions in school. . . . $2.95

NEW ☐ **Matter Baby 1** (John Marshall & Steve Willhite) The adventures of the diapered dynamo — the world's toughest baby! b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **Shotgun Mary: Blood Lore 1** (of 4; Herb Mallette & Neil Googe) Mary discovers a horribly mutilated body which leads her on a trail of demonic possession filled with strange mystical beings. $2.95

NEW ☐ **Warrior Nun Areala: Black & White 1** (of 4; Barry Lyga + Herb Mallette & Anthony Lisboa + Ken Lilly & Sam De La Rosa) The battling nun in monochrome adventures. $2.95

BIG ENTERTAINMENT

☐ **Mike Danger 10** (Max Allen Collins & Brad Gorby + Terry Beatty) Danger's beautiful secretary has returned after an alien abduction. But is she the same woman or has she been changed? $2.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Tad Williams' Mirrorworld: Rain 0** (of 2; Tad Williams & Fred Harper) Comics adaptation of Williams' **Mirrorworld** series of books. Concluding part of the two-issue mini-series which started with #1. . . . . $3.25

BONGO COMICS

☐ **Simpsons Comics 29** (Ronnie Rosenthal & Bill Morrison) Homer decides he needs to do something to restore the kids' pride in him. So he becomes a WWF wrestler! $2.25

BRAINSTORM COMICS

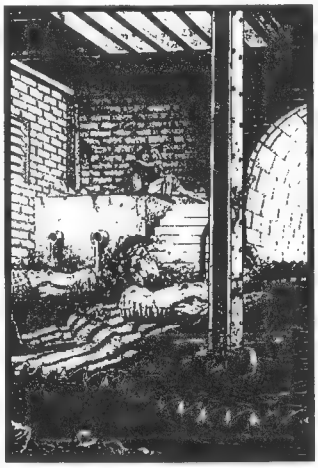
☐ **Vamperotica 24** (Kirk Lindo & various) A Trihexicon has caused Luxura to lose control of her house. The Vampress needs all her guile and agility to escape the spell and restore order. Mature readers. $2.95

☐ **Vampfire: Erotic Echo 2** (Fauve) Bethany leads Echo through the final phases of transformation and the two begin a torrid relationship. Mature

readers. $2.95

CALIBER PRESS

☐ **Cavewoman 6** (Budd Root) Things continue to spiral out of control as the police perform an autopsy on the still-living Klyde. b&w $2.95



ONE-SHOT ☐ **Daemonstorm: Deadworld** (Colin Clayton + Chris Dows + Art Wetherall & Tim Perkins + D'Israeli + Mike Wieringo + Richard Case) Daemonstorm reaches the world of King Zombie. Continues through several regular Caliber titles. 48pg $3.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Exit: Epilogue** (Nabiel Kanan) The conclusion of the teenage angst story that started as a UK small press title and has since won critical acclaim. $2.95

☐ **Kabuki: Skin Deep 2** (David Mack) Kabuki is held prisoner in a Japanese correctional facility for wayward assassins. Alternate cover by Alex Ross. $2.95

☐ **Kaos Moon 2** (David Boller) The secrets of the rise and fall of the Egyptian gods are revealed to Katja. b&w $2.95

☐ **Kingdom of the Wicked 4** (Ian Edgington & D'Israeli) Chris Graham continues to struggle for his life on a hospital bed, but the true battle is going on in his mind. b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **Level X #1** (Dan Harbison & Randy Buccini + Jerry Foley) The adventures of six people who are sucked into the dream mechanism of a super-computer. b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **Lori Lovecraft 1** (Mike Vosburg) The adventures of a 30-something Hollywood wannabe who gets involved with the occult. 48pg Mature readers. $2.95

☐ **Negative Burn 44** (various) Anthology including Kevin & Andi Watson's *Skeleton Key*; John MCCrea & Si Spencer's *Indignities*; *Red Vengeance* by Chris Kemple; *My Life as Riley* by Phil Hester and *Mr Drawing Board Belly* by Paul Fricke & Don Simpson. b&w 64pg $3.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Oz: Heroes of Oz** (Ralph Griffith & Stuart Kerr + Tim Haltrop + various) Collecting the five Oz specials in one 128-page trade paperback. b&w . $14.95

☐ **Raven Chronicles 14** (Chris Dows + Colin Clayton & John Kissee) A member of the Raven team lies critically injured in hospital... Or does he? . . $2.95

☐ **Rust 2** (Steve Miller & Mike Huddlestone) Rust must stop Vox, whose powers are raging out of control, from destroying Kansas City. b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **The Searchers: Apostle of Mercy 1** (of 4; Colin Clayton + Chris Dows & Art Wetherell) The Searchers question their existance and ask, "What's going on with the dinosaurs and ninjas?" b&w$2.95

NEW ☐ **Strange Attractors: Moon Fever 1** (of 4; Michael Cohen & Mark Sherman) Return of the acclaimed cult series. b&w $2.95

☐ **Triggerman 2** (Malcolm Bourne & Mark Bloodworth) Matthew Harris, the serial killer, is believed to have been executed by the government. But, instead, he has been re-trained and brainwashed and recruited to help stalk other wanted serial killers. b&w $2.95

☐ **The War of the Worlds 4** (Randy Zimmerman & Horus) Kansas is in ruins and the Martians continue to make headway across America. The resistence begins to feel inadequate. b&w $2.95

☐ **The Wretch 4** (Phillip Hester & Ande Parks) More bizarre adventures with Hester's enigmatic hero. b&w . . . $2.95

CHAOS COMICS

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Evil Ernie: Encore Presentation 5** (of 5; Brian Pulido & Steven Hughes + Justiniano) Retelling the original Evil Ernie series with extra artwork and story. b&w . $1.95

☐ **Lady Death: The Crucible 3** (of 6; Brian Pulido & Steven Hughes + Jack Gray) Lady Death and her new-found family are under siege from Scorpia and the Necro-Elite Doom Magistrates. Promises a shock ending! $2.95

CFD PRODUCTIONS

☐ **Lacunae 11** (various) Includes an interview with *Europa & The Pirate Twins* creator Harvey Mercadoocasio of **Shi** fame. Mature readers. b&w . . . $2.50

NEW ☐ **Vonpyre 1** (Brian Tatge & Randy Zimmerman) An unusual variant on the *Big* theme. A boy turns into an adult with the mind of a 15-year-old and goes searching for a woman. b&w 24pg . $2.25

CRUSADE

NEW ☐ **Manga Shi 2000 #1** (of 3; Bill Tucci & Dan Mishkin + various) The manga version of the heroine in a battle to prevent machines from taking over the world. $2.95

☐ **Shi 12** (Bill Tucci & Peter Gutierrez) Resolicited with extra pages and a flipbook preview of **Angel Fire** $2.95

DARK HORSE

Dark Horse titles

☐ **Barry Windsor-Smith: Storyteller 5** (Barry Windsor-Smith w/various) Continuing the adventures of *The Young Gods*, *Paradox Man* and *The Freebooters*. 40pg Mature readers. *[05/02/97]* $4.95

NEW ☐ **Brave 1** (*Blanc Noir;* of 4; Cully Hamner & Jason Martin + Adam Hughes) Who is the mysterious native American that is bumping off key members of a top Mafia family? Plus a six-page prelude to the forthcoming Adam Hughes series. *[19/02/97]* $5.95

NEW ☐ **Dark Horse Classics: Aliens Versus Predator 1** (of 6; Randy Stradley & Phil Norwood + Karl Story) Retelling the award-winning aliens team-up from 1989. *[19/02/97]* $2.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Dark Horse Monsters** (various) Four stories featuring blood-curdling monsters from outer space, dinosaurs and giant beasts. *[05/02/97]* $2.95

☐ **Dark Horse Presents 118** (various) Anthology: *Trypto, the Acid Dog* (Bill Mumy + Miguel Ferrer and Steve Leialoha); *Monkeyman & O'Brien* (Arthur Adams) and *Hectic Planet* (Evan Dorkin). Mature readers. *[12/02/97]* $2.95

☐ **Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan 8** (Allan Gross & Chris Schenck + George Freeman) Tarzan and Mugambi are travelling through Upper Kenya when they discover an artifact of immense power has fallen into the hands of a deranged Nazi. *[05/02/97]* $2.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **The Exotics** (Jean "Moebius" Giraud) A prequel to **The Airtight Garage** and **The Man From Ciguri**. 80pg Mature readers. *[19/02/97]* $7.95

☐ **Ghost 22** (Eric Luke + Ivan Reis & Randy Emberlin) Ghost discovers an entrance to the underground city beneath Arcadia. *[12/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **The Heretic 4** (*Blanc Noir;* of 4; Dexter Vines & Joe Phillips) Heretic has to dig deep to find powers which will save Terceron City and return the Allegiance to its former glory. Mature readers. *[26/02/97]* $2.95

☐ **Jonny Quest: The Real Adventures 6** (Shaun McLaughlin & Dean Zachary + Andrew Pepoy) The Quest team travels to Russia to run damage control on an old nuclear reactor, but things immediately start to go wrong. *[26/02/97]* $2.95

☐ **Lords of Misrule 2** (of 6; Dan Abnett + John Tomlinson & Steve White + Peter Snejbjerg) Why is Jack bumping into missing fighter pilots from 1941 and members of the King's Soldiers from the Crusades? Mature. b&w *[19/02/97]* . $2.95

☐ **Predator: Kindred 3** (of 4; Scott Tolson + Jason Lamb + Roger Petersen & Bruce Patterson) Kelly is on the hunt for a serial killer and a strange alien that's been spotted in the swamp. Are the two related? And how does he stop them if they are? *[19/02/97]* $2.50

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Species: Human Race 4** (of 4; Stephen Bissette & Mark Nelson + George Pratt) Kal, the human/alien hybrid searches for women who are strong enough to carry an alien child. Mature

readers. *[26/02/97]* $2.95

☐ **Usagi Yojimbo 10** (Stan Sakai) Usagi Yojimbo's origin is explained: who killed his master and how he became a ronin. b&w 24pg *[26/02/97]* $2.95

Star Wars licensed titles

☐ **Star Wars: A New Hope — The Special Edition 2** (of 4; Bruce Jones & Eduardo Barreto + Al Williamson + James Sinclair) To coincide with the release of the remastered *Star Wars* film, this is a new version of the comics adaptation and features the extra footage. *[19/02/97]* $2.95

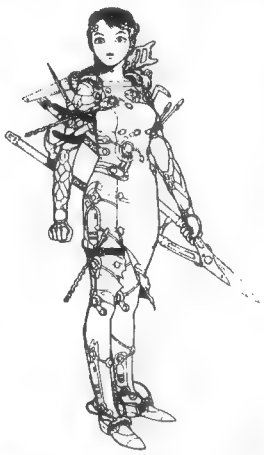
ONE-SHOT ☐ **Star Wars: Dark Forces — Soldier For The Empire GSA** (William Dietz & Dean Williams) A *Star Wars* novel with illustrations. The story of a soldier who betrays the Empire to aid the Rebels. 128pg hardback book *[12/03/97]* $24.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi — The Golden Age of the Sith 5** (of 5; Kevin Anderson & Dario Carrasco + Mark Heike + Bill Black) The concluding part of the tale of two Jedi brothers, each with different destinies. *[12/02/97]* $2.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Star Wars: X-Wing Rogue Squadron — Warrior Princess 4** (of 4; Scott Tolson + Michael Stackpole & John Nadeau + Jordi Ensign) Plourr has taken on the crown, but discovers that she has a long lost brother who is eager for the job. *[26/02/97]* . . $2.95

Dark Horse Manga titles

☐ **Chronowar 7** (of 9; Kazumasa Takayama) Machida, Chiaki and detective Watanabe begin to train each other in their own specific specialities. *[19/02/97]* $2.95



NEW ☐ **Drakuun: Rise of the Dragon Princess 1** (Johji Manabe) The creator of **Outlanders** returns with a new series set in 4077 on a planet beset with struggle and war. Mature readers. *[12/02/97]* $2.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Gunsmith Cats: The Return of Gray 7** (of 7; Kenichi Sonoda) Concluding episode which features a guest appearance from Bean Bandit — an anime favourite from Japan. Mature. b&w *[12/02/97]* . $2.95

☐ **Oh My Goddess Part IV #2: The Trials of Morisato 2** (of 3; Kosuke Fujishima) Keiichi Morisato and his homemade moon rock have saved Skuld from turning into a gray haired babushka overnight. Sounds like fun! b&w *[19/02/97]* . . . $2.95

DC COMICS

Batman Family

☐ **Azrael 28** (Denis O'Neil & Barry Kitson + Jim Pascoe) Jean Paul unwittingly releases the inmates at Arkham Asylum and is then kidnapped by the Joker. *[12/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Batman & Robin Adventures 17** (Paul Dini + Ty Templeton & Rick Burchett + Joe Staton) Based on the Warner Bros cartoon series. The Mad Hatter is dead and buried — so why is his ex-fiancee being plagued by him? *[20/02/97]* $1.75

☐ **Batman 541** (Doug Moench & Kelley Jones + John Beatty) The Batman is first hunted by The Spectre and then joins forces with him to track down a vicious serial killer. *[12/02/97]* . . $1.95

☐ **Batman: The Long Halloween 5** (of 13; Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale) Poison Ivy is the latest villain to become embroiled in the search for Holiday, the serial killer. *[20/02/97]* . . $2.95

☐ **Batman Chronicles 8** (John Stanisci & Sal Buscema + Walt Simonson) A secret of the Batman is revealed — the origin of how he obtained the dinosaur in the Batcave! *[20/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 93** (Garth Ennis & Will Simpson) Batman goes on the rampage after being injected with the weird drug LSD 2000. Only a couple of ex-cops can stop him. *[26/02/97]* . . . $1.95

☐ **Batman: Shadow of the Bat 61** (Alan Grant & Jim Aparo + Stan Woch) In an off-beat story, Batman helps a number of people trying to find a second chance of happiness. *05/02/97]* . . . $1.95

NEW ☐ **Batman/Wildcat 1** (of 3; Chuck Dixon + Beau Smith & Sergio Cariello + Art Thibert) Re-introducing Wildcat into DC Universe continuity. Batman attempts to break an underground super-human fight ring. *[05/02/97]* . . . $2.25

NEW ☐ **Birds of Prey: Revolution** (Chuck Dixon + Steffano Raffaele + Bob McLeod) Re-introducing the twosome of Black Canary and Oracle in a new series of quarterly adventures. This month they're in Bane country. *[26/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Catwoman 44** (Doug Moench & Jim Balent + Ray McCarthy) Cybercat, She-Cat and Catwoman together spells one thing: cat fight! *[26/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Detective Comics 708** (Chuck Dixon & Graham Nolan + Bill Sienkiewicz) Riddler continues to be a thorn in Batman's side, while GunHawk and Deathstroke are both hired by a vengeful mob boss with a number of prime contracts. *[20/02/97]* . . . $1.95

☐ **Hitman 13** (Garth Ennis & John McCrea) Hitman battles animal zombies at the Gotham aquarium. *[26/02/97]* . . $2.25

☐ **Nightwing 7** (Chuck Dixon & Scott McDaniel + Karl Story) Dick discovers the controlling person in Bludhaven's underworld and the revelation is a real shocker. *[05/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Robin 40** (Chuck Dixon & Staz Johnson + Bob Smith) Robin helps Ariana deal with her recent traumatic experience. The Spoiler faces an army of looters. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

DC: Milestone imprint

☐ **Hardware 50** (Dan Chichester & Prentis Rollins + Ken Branch) Hardware licks his wounds and tries to work out where his future lies after being horribly beaten by Tyrant. Also the creation of Hardware 3.0. *[26/02/97]* $3.95

☐ **Icon 44** (Mark Bright & Romeo Tanghal) Rocket and her best friend go to New York City for a shopping holiday and run into criminals called The Smurphs. *[05/02/97]* . . . $2.50

☐ **Static 46** (Mark Bright & Jeff Moore + Hector Collazo) Virgil is spotted by a popular girl at school and his hormones go into overdrive! *[12/02/97]* . . . $2.50

DC Universe

☐ **Aquaman 31** (Peter David & Roger Robinson + Ken Branch) Aquaman's new powers are put to the test against The Shark, eventually initiating a shocking metamorphosis. *[20/02/97]* $1.75

☐ **Aztek: The Ultimate Man 9** (Grant Morrison + Mark Millar & Steven Harris + Keith Champagne) Aztek races to Metropolis in an attempt to recruit Superman for a mercy mission, but runs into the Parasite instead. Penultimate issue! *[20/02/97]* $1.75

☐ **The Book of Fate 3** (Keith Giffen & Ron Wagner + Bill Reinhold) A reality-warping war fought in humankind's subconscious threatens to change the Earth forever. Fate stands between Chaos and Order, but his cause may be hopeless. *[05/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Challengers of the Unknown**

3 (Steven Grant + Len Kaminski & John Paul Leon + Shawn Martinborough) The new team of Challengers investigates a grisly phenomena that leaves one member dead. *[20/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Flash 124** (Mark Waid + Brian Augustyn & Paul Ryan + John Nyberg) Flash wakes one morning to discover that he has become the slowest man on Earth! *[26/02/97]* $1.75

☐ **Green Arrow 119** (Chuck Dixon & William Rosado + Bob Campenella) Who is the mysterious prisoner who resembles Oliver Queen? Is it a hoax, a set up, or a revelation? *[12/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Green Lantern 85** (Ron Marz & Darryl Banks + Romeo Tanghal) Green Lantern battles Fatality for the right to hold the power lantern. *[05/02/97]* $1.75

☐ **Impulse 24** (Mark Waid & Humberto Ramos + Wayne Faucher) Bart's mother comes from the future to reclaim her son! *[12/02/97]* $1.75

☐ **Jack Kirby's Fourth World 2** (John Byrne) Big Barda battles the Norse god known as Thor, God of Thunder (!?!). The New Gods journey to the Source and discover that they are not the only gods who inhabit the Universe. Cover by Walt Simonson. *[12/02/97]* . . . $1.95

☐ **JLA 4** (Grant Morrison & Howard Porter) The conclusion of the *Hyperclan* story. The true-identity of the Hyperclan is revealed as the team faces impossible odds. *[05/02/97]* . . $1.95

☐ **Legionnaires 47** (Tom Peyer + Tom McCraw & Jeffrey Moy + W.C Carani) One of the 20th Century Legionnaires is in a coma and could die, only Brainiac 5 can save the hero's life. *[12/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Legion of Super-Heroes 91** (Tom Peyer & Tom McCraw + Lee Moder + Ron Boyd) All the members of the teams are reunited, but time is running out for one member and the Flash drops in to help out — but which Flash? *[26/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Lobo 38** (Alan Grant & Carl Critchlow) Lobo becomes Bomandi, the Last Boy on Earth. The adventures of the primitive Main Man! *[20/02/97]* . . $2.25

☐ **Power of Shazam 25** (Jerry Ordway & Peter Krause) Something has gone wrong in Fawcett City and everything has changed. CC Batson is the Big Red Cheese; Sivana is the city mayor and no one seems to notice. *[05/02/97]* $1.75

☐ **Night Force 5** (Marv Wolfman & Shawn Martinborough) Baron Winters recruits a serial killer to aid Night Force against a dream-like killer. *[12/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Scare Tactics 5** (Len Kaminski & Anthony Williams + Andy Lanning) Screamqueen meets Caine, a killer who turns his victims' bodies into works of art. *[26/02/97]* $2.25

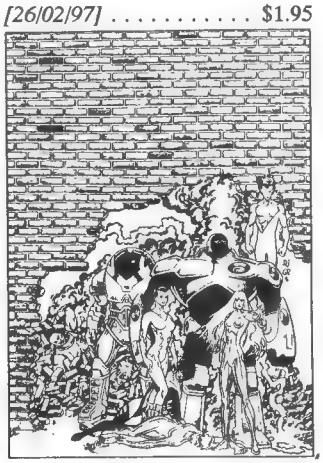
NEW ☐ **The Shade 1** (of 4; James Robinson & Gene Ha) The story of the Starman's enigmatic nemesis, told across a number of decades and illustrated each issue by different artists. *[12/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Sovereign Seven 21** (Chris Claremont & Rom Lim + Chris Ivy + Dave Cockrum) Clark Kent aka Superman shows up at Cascade's new apartment with a special gift. *[12/02/97]* . . $1.95

☐ **The Spectre 52** (John Ostrander & Tom Mandrake) Nate Kane discovers a 50-year old unsolved mystery that implicates Jim Corrigan. *[26/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **Starman 29** (James Robinson & Tony Harris + Wade Von Grawbadger) Opal City as seen through the eyes of The Shade. 32-pages of story, no adverts. *[05/02/97]*. $2.25

☐ **Teen Titans 7** (Dan Jurgens & George Perez) The Atom quits after another argument with Mr Jupiter and the rest of the Teen Titans team gets its butt kicked by the Dark Nemesis. *[26/02/97]* $1.95



☐ **Wonder Woman 120** (John Byrne + George Perez + Nick Cardy + Brian Bolland + Jill Thompson) The 10th anniversary of Wonder Woman's relaunch and a host of former artists drop in to lend a hand. The main story involves the devolution of Diana. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

DC licensed titles

☐ **Animaniacs 24** (various) Based on the Warner Bros TV cartoon. $1.75

☐ **Looney Tunes 28** (various) More fun and games featuring the Warner's cartoon characters in new adventures. $1.50

☐ **Mad Magazine 355** (The Usual Gang of Idiots) Long-running humour magazine continues. b&w 48pg . . . $2.50

☐ **Pinky & The Brain 10** (Bobbi JG & David Cody Weiss & Walter Carzon + Mike DeCarlo) The duo enters the dangerous and potentially hazardous area called Thunderdump. *[05/02/97]* $1.75

DC Helix Science Fiction

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **The Black Lamb 6** (of 6; Tim Truman) Black Lamb comes face to face with Vlad the Impaler and his daughter. *12/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Brainbanx 2** (of 6; Elaine Lee & Temujin) Anna Elysian, a telepath twinned with another brain, must flee to a perilous alien wilderness known as the Sheol. *[12/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Gemini Blood 8** (Christopher Hinz & Tommy Lee Edwards) The penultimate issue. Nick and Laura believe that an escaped Gemini is responsible for a number of child killings. *[20/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Time Breakers 4** (of 5; Rachel Pollack & Chris Weston) Angela travels back in time in an attempt to prevent herself from meeting with and ultimately joining the Time Breakers. This may cause the Great Paradox — revealing the group's final secret. *[20/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Cyberella 8** (Howard Chaykin & Don Cameron) Cyberella is forced to battle a transformed and dangerous BTIII to save Slangeliego from certain destruction. *[05/02/97]* . . $2.50

☐ **Vermillion 7** (Lucius Shepard & Al Davison + Kim DeMulder) The baffling SF series continues with Cave killing a god and attempting to find his place in the new order of things. Cover by Mike Kaluta. *[26/02/97]* . $2.50

Superman Family

☐ **Action Comics 732** (David Michelinie & Tom Grummett + Denis Rodier) The Atomic Skull continues to destroy parts of Metropolis and Superman cannot even touch the villain, let alone stop him. *[26/02/97]* . . . $1.95

☐ **Superboy 38** (Ron Marz & Ramon Bernardo) Superboy faces the terrible threat of... acne. Or is it? Could his cellular structure be breaking down? *[20/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Superboy and the Ravers 8** (Karl Kesel & Steve Mattsson + Paul Pelletier) The road trip continues as Superboy attempts to gain access to Guy Gardner's bar using a phoney ID card. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Adventures of Superman 545** (Karl Kesel & Scot Eaton + Jose Marzan) The Atomic Skull has returned to Metropolis, but Superman can't stop him because

his powers are changing. *[20/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Steel 37** (Christopher Priest & Denys Cowan + Tom Palmer) Steel is romantically linked to Amanda Quick, but she is being courted by the diabolical Skorpio. *[05/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Supergirl 8** (Peter David & Gary Frank + Cam Smith) Supergirl has a showdown with Buzz and Charlie gets a real shock. *[19/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Superman Adventures 6** (Scott McCloud & Rick Burchett + Terry Austin) After a blinding flash of white light, Superman discovers that everything in Metropolis, except him, is moving backwards in time. *[05/02/97]* $1.75

☐ **Superman 122** (Dan Jurgens & Ron Frenz + Josef Rubinstein) Lois Kent nee Lane visits the Fortress of Solitude for the very first time. *[12/02/97]* . . . $1.95

☐ **Superman: Man of Steel 66** (Louise Simonson & Jon Bogdanove) Superman deals with Rajiv, who is terrorising Metropolis from an orbiting satellite. *[05/02/97]* $1.95

DC: Vertigo mature titles

☐ **Books of Faerie 2** (of 3; Bronwyn Carlton & Peter Gross) When King Obrey is killed in battle by Auberon, a reluctant Titania marries her husband's murderer. *[05/02/97]* . . . $2.50

☐ **Books of Magic 35** (John Ney Rieber & Peter Snejbjerg) Traumatised by the destruction of Faerie, Titania looks for solace. *[12/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **The Dreaming 11** (Bryan Talbot & Peter Docherty + Tayyar Ozkan) *Weird Romance, Part 3* (of 4). Bridget and Matthew the Raven realise that romantic illusions may be extremely hazardous to one's health. *[20/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Essential Vertigo: The Sandman 9** (Neil Gaiman & Malcolm Jones III + Mike Dringenberg) Reprinting the first chapter of *The Doll's House* and the secret mystery of Nada. *[12/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Essential Vertigo: Swamp Thing 6** (Alan Moore & Steve Bissett) Reprint. Abigail gets a warning from Jason Blood about her new job. *[26/02/97]* . $1.95

☐ **Hellblazer 112** (Paul Jenkins & Sean Phillips) England continues to fall apart and John is entrusted with the protection of the Grail from Jack Green and his other-worldly cohorts. *[26/02/97]* $2.25

☐ **House of Secrets 7** (Steven Seagle & Teddy Kristiansen) The origin of the House through the eyes of the five people who built it. *[12/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **The Invisibles Volume 2 #3** (Grant Morrison & Phil Jimenez + John Stokes) Vertigo's superteam breaks into an underground research centre in an attempt to steal an AIDS vaccine and uncover a US plot to kill all homosexuals. *[26/02/97]* . $2.50

☐ **Preacher 24** (Garth Ennis & Steve Dillon) Jesse makes a last ditch attempt to save what is left of Cassidy. Cover by Glenn Fabry. *[05/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Sandman Mystery Theatre 49** (Matt Wagner + Steven T. Seagle & Guy Davis) *The Scarlet Ghost, Part 1* (of 4). The Sandman investigates the rise in pulp magazines as one publisher becomes the target for sabotage and murder. *[20/02/97]* . . $2.25

☐ **Seekers: Into the Mystery 15** CANCELLED (J.M DeMatteis & Jill Thompson) Lucas's odyssey has concluded, now he stands face-to-face with the mysterious Magician and his life is in the balance. *[05/02/97]* $2.95

NEW ☐ **Unknown Soldier 1** (Garth Ennis & Killian Plunkett) The secret history of the WW2 special agent as interpreted by the "hot" horror writer, Ennis. *[20/02/97]* . $2.50

DRAWN & QUARTERLY

ONE-SHOT ☐ **No Love Lost** (Ariel Bordeaux) The story of a bored and unromantic couple of lovers called Emma and Jed. 56pg b&w $6.95

☐ **Nowhere 2** (Debbie Drechsler) The experiences of a young girl who has to move from her friends to a new neighbourhood. Mature readers. $3.75

EVENT COMICS

ONE-SHOT ☐ **The Ash Files** (Joe Quesada & Jim Palmiotti + various) Everything you wanted to know about the fireman superhero known as Ash, but were afraid to ask. $2.95

NEW ☐ **Legends of Kid Death & Fluffy 1** (Joe Quesada + Jim Palmiotti + various) Four different and individual depictions of the Event humour character. Five variant covers available. b&w . . $2.95

EDDIE CAMPBELL

☐ **Eddie Campbell's Bacchus 22** (Eddie Campbell) Bacchus comes face to face with the judge who put him in prison and discovers that the man of the law has a penchant for scantily clad young women. Mature. . . $2.95

FANTAGRAPHICS

☐ **The Comics Journal 194** (various) Critically-acclaimed comics discussion and interview magazine. 128pg Mature readers. b&w $5.95

☐ **Frank 2** (Jim Woodring) Frank rushes into the night in search of earthy foods and a good drubbing. Odd. . . . $3.95

☐ **Minimum Wage Vol 2 #6** (Bob Fingerman) Rob is growing more and more disillusioned with his career. Mature readers. $2.95

NEW ☐ **Steve Ditko's Strange Avenging Tales 1** (Steve Ditko) A new series from the co-creator of Spider-Man. b&w 24pg . $2.95

GEMSTONE PUBLISHING

☐ **Two-Fisted Tales 19** (various) Stories by Reed Crandall, Jack Davis, John Severin, Bill Elder & Joe Orlando. $2.50

☐ **Vault of Horror 19** (various) Stories by Joe Orlando, Johnny Craig, Graham Ingels and Jack Kamen. $2.50

☐ **Weird Fantasy 19** (various) Stories by Joe Orlando, Bill Elder, Jack Kamen, John Severin & Al Williamson. $2.50

HALLOWEEN COMICS

☐ **Chiller 3** (James Hudnall & John Ridgway) Brian Marx has found the ancestor of the person who summoned the demon.$2.95

☐ **Espers 6** (James Hudnall & John Ridgway) The first of the new storylines concludes. $2.95

HARRIS COMICS

☐ **Cyberfrog 2: 3rd Anniversary Special — The Sequel** (Ethan Van Sciver) Reprinting the rarest of all the **Cyberfrog** issues. $1.50

☐ **Vampirella Silver Anniversary Collection 2** (of 4; Bill DuBay & Jose Gonzalez) Retelling the original Warren classics in comic-sized versions. Covers by Jim Silke & Mark Beachum. $2.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Vampirella Lives 3** (of 3; Warren Ellis & Amanda Conner + Jimmy Palmiotti) Vampi has risen from the grave, but she isn't the same vampire that died at the hands of Nyx. Cover by J. Scott Campbell and a photo cover featuring the new Vampirella model. $2.95

IMAGE COMICS

Homage Comics

☐ **Kurt Busiek's Astro City Volume 2 #7** (Kurt Busiek & Brent Anderson) The Shadow Hill murders create tensions in Astro City as Honor Guard single-handedly battles the invading aliens. $2.50

☐ **Strangers In Paradise Vol 3 #4** (Terry Moore) Francine is in for a shock. She wanders into the atrium in the office building of her new job and discovers a nude statue of herself on display.$2.75

Wildstorm Productions

☐ **Backlash 29** (Sean Ruffner & Brett Booth + Juvaun Kirby) Backlash comes face to face with his father's murderer in Atlantis. *[05/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **DV8 #5** (Warren Ellis & Humberto Ramos + Sal Regla) Copycat is teleported to a weird white room with no seams, no lines, no textures and no way out! *[26/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Gen^{13} Bootleg 4** (Walt & Louise Simonson) *Dark Knight* styled series with rotating creative teams. Gen^{13} saves the life of a young girl who may be the cause of its demise. Ties-in to

Weapon Zero. *[05/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Gen^{13} #17** (Brandon Choi & J. Scott Campbell + Alex Garner) Helmut has a rematch with Grunge, Burnout and Lynch. *[12/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Grifter 8** (Steven Grant & Matt Broome + Troy Hubbs) Grifter goes in search of Zealot, who has disappeared off the face of the planet. *[19/02/97]* . $2.50

☐ **Siege 2** (Jonathan Peterson & Robert Teranishi + Al Vey) Omega Squad discovers that murder may have been the true cause of Lt Bauer's death. *[26/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **StormWatch 45** (Warren Ellis & Tom Raney + Randy Elliott) Battalion is having a crisis of confidence and aims to prove that he's the guiding light behind Wildstorm's most powerful superteam. *[12/02/97]* . . $2.50

☐ **Wetworks 26** (Francis Takanaga & Jason Johnson + various) A change of pace as the team takes a break and severs connections with Armand Waering. *[19/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **WildC.A.T.s 35** (Barbara Kesel & Richard Johnson) Acting as a sequel to the new ongoing series **Savant Garde** by Kesel and Odagawa. *[26/02/97]* $2.50

NEW ☐ **WildC.A.T.s/X-Men 1** (of 4; Scott Lobdell + Travis Charest & Travis Charest + various) The historic first meeting between mutant and Wild-Agent. Wolverine meets Zealot and the year is 1941! 48pg *[19/02/97]* $2.50

NEW ☐ **Wildstorm Spotlight 1** (Alan Moore & Carlos D'Anda) The first spotlight falls on Majestic and his battle with Majestros, the most powerful Kherubim that has ever lived. *[12/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Wynonna Earp 3** (Beau Smith & Joyce Chin + Mark Irwin) Wynonna and her werewolf biker allies attempt to prevent the drug HEMO from going nationwide. But the vampires have differing ideas. *[05/02/97]* $2.50

Top Cow Productions

☐ **Cyberforce 31** (Brian Holguin & Dave Finch) Cyberforce attempts to discover why its world is crumbling around it. *[26/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Darkness 3** (Garth Ennis & Marc Silvestri) Estacado has discovered the awful truth about his existence. Now he's in a race against time to prevent everyone else from getting their hands on him. *[26/02/97]* $2.50

☐ **Weapon Zero 11** (Walter Simonson & Joe Benitez) The team heads for the Moon to uncover secrets about its creators. *[05/03/97]* $2.50

☐ **Witchblade 12** (Christina Z + Mike Turner & David Wohl + D-Tron) Sarah and Jake start to get hot and steamy. Witchblade discovers a shocking secret about Lisa, the Microwave Murderer. *[19/02/97]* $2.50

Todd McFarlane Productions

☐ **Curse of the Spawn 6** (Alan McElroy & Dwayne Turner) The spotlight falls on Sam and Twitch as they attempt to uncover a missing person. The missing person just happens to be Gretchen Culver and she's no longer missing — the police have just discovered her unmarked grave! $1.95

☐ **Spawn 59** (Todd McFarlane & Greg Capullo) The Clown stalks little Cyan and in turn terrifies Wanda. This attracts the attention of Spawn — just what the Clown had planned... . . . . $1.95

Cartoon Books

☐ **Bone 16** (Jeff Smith) Image reprint of the Cartoon Books series. b&w $2.95

Image Comics Books

☐ **Hellshock 2** (Jae Lee) Daniel must learn to control his unearthly powers. Mature readers. $2.50

☐ **Dark Chylde 4** (Randy Queen & Jason Gorder) Maximum bad girl moves to her new home — the penultimate chapter of her first story arc. $2.50

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Vignettes: The Autobiographical Comix of Valentino** (Jim Valentino) A collection of Valentino's pre-superhero work. Including Normalman and much of his obscure independent stuff. 100pg b&w $7.95

☐ **Mars Attacks The Image Universe 3** (of 4; Keith Giffen & Andy Smith + Bill Sienkiewicz) Topps aliens meet Image superheroes. Ties in directly to Topps' **Mars Attacks The Savage Dragon**. This month Gen^{13}, Witchblade, The Maxx, WildC.A.T.s, Shadowhawk, Wildstar, Labman, Freak Force, Weapon Zero, Team 7 and Cyberforce get involved in the Martian fun and games.. . $2.50

NEW ☐ **The Tenth 1** (Tony Daniel + Beau Smith & Kevin Conrad) New series featuring the 10th creation of a megalomaniac with world conquest pretensions. Unfortunately for the looney, his 10th creation doesn't like him very much! $2.50

Highbrow Entertainment

☐ **Savage Dragon 36** (Erik Larsen) Acting as a prequel to a new Freak Force series beginning next month! $2.50

NEW ☐ **The Savage Dragon: Red Horizon 1** (of 3; Mike Miller) Violence and scantily-clad women. No specific storyline given (as usual). $2.50

KITCHEN SINK

NEW ☐ **Blue Loco 1** (Mark Landman) Computer-generated comic book featuring Fetal Elvis and Colonel Placenta. Very tasteful! Mature. . . $5.95

☐ **The Crow: Waking Nightmares 2** (of 4; Chris Golden & Phil Hestor) Mark Leung was a good cop, father and husband, he is now good at revenge. His target, the child pornographers who have kidnapped his children. b&w $2.95

LIGHTNING COMICS

NEW ☐ **Hellina: Kiss of Death 1** (Gene Vincent & Paul Abrams + John Barnes) A new version of the cult bad girl anti-heroine! Mature readers. b&w $2.95

LONDON NIGHT

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Full Metal Fiction 1** (Everette Hartsoe & Kevin Hill & Bert Robertson) Celebrating London Night Studio's fifth anniversary with this 48-page anthology. Features Razor, Morbid Angel, Poizon & Stryke. b&w 48pg $3.95

MARVEL

Marvel Heroes

☐ **Avengers 6** (Rob Liefeld + Jeph Loeb & Chap Yaep + Jonathan Sibal) The *Heroes Reborn* crossover begins with the Earth's Mightiest Heroes torn apart by Iron Man and The Savage Hulk! *[12/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Captain America 6** (Rob Liefeld + Jeph Loeb & Rob Liefeld + Jon Sibal) The coming of Cable. The X-Force leader arrives in the pocket universe and sows the seeds for the *Heroes Return*. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Code of Honour 3** (of 4; Chuck Dixon & Bob Wakelin) The **Marvels** spin-off continues. Jeff Piper has to play hero against Electro and Juggernaut. 48pg *[05/02/97]* $2.95

☐ **Daredevil 363** (Karl Kesel & Gene Colan) Daredevil wanders the streets of New York examining his past. Welcome back Gene Colan, albeit for just one issue! *[05/02/97]* . . . $1.95

☐ **Elektra 6** (Peter Milligan & Mike Deodato Jr) Elektra opens in her off-Broadway dancing show and The Architect, who is very annoyed that Elektra didn't kill him, attempts to do some upstaging! *[26/02/97]* . . . $1.95

☐ **Fantastic Four 6** (Jim Lee + Brandon Choi + Scott Williams) What does the Fantastic Four have to do with the transformation of The Avengers? *[05/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Ghost Rider 84** (Ivan Velez & Pop Mhan + John Lowe) The final showdown with the corpse of Barbara Ketch! The new look Rider is knee-deep in zombies. *[12/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Incredible Hulk 452** (Peter David & Mike Deodato + Tom Wegrzyn) The Hulk has become the ruler of a small Pacific island. The islanders' are happy with him, but his own mind is preventing him from relaxing and taking it easy. *[19/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Iron Man 6** (Jim Lee + Scott Lobdell & Whilce Portacio + Scott Williams) Iron Man versus the Avengers. Is this a test to attract the armoured one into the team or does the Avengers team believe Stark to be a real threat? *[19/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Journey Into Mystery 508** (Tom Defalco & Deodato Studios) The lost gods square up to a reborn villain — one of their own gone bad! But will any of this lead them to Thor? *[12/02/97]* $1.95

NEW ☐ **Marvel Adventures 1** (Ralph Macchio & Andy Kuhn + Rob Still) The Hulk stars in Marvel's latest

animated TV series adapted for comics. *[12/02/97]* $1.50

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Marvel Valentine Special** (Tom Defalco + Mark Waid + Tom Peyer & various) Love stories across the Marvel Universe. *[05/02/97]* ... $2.95

☐ **Punisher 18** (John Ostrander & Tom Lyle + Rob Jones) The Punisher is missing and the only clue to his whereabouts is a man who vaguely resembles Frank Castle, living in an abandoned church. *[19/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Silver Surfer 127** (J. M. DeMatteis & Ron Garney + Bob Wiacek) The Surfer continues his quest for his lost humanity and looks for answers with Alicia Masters. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **2099: World of Tomorrow 8** (Ben Raab & Joe Kelly + various) Series featuring the most popular characters from the 2099 Universe. $2.50

NEW ☐ **Thunderbolts 1** (Kurt Busiek & Mark Bagley) Debut of Marvel's newest superteam, designed to fill the void by the missing heroes. But what will become of them when the MIA heroes return from pastures new? *[19/02/97]* $2.95

NEW ☐ **Untold Legend of Captain Marvel 1** (Tom Brevoort + Mike Kanterovich & Scott Kolins + John Lowe) The young Mar-Vel has to don his new (old) costume and save a Kree warrior lost in Shi'Ar space. *[26/02/97]* $2.95

Spider-Man family

☐ **Amazing Spider-Man 422** (Tom DeFalco & Steve Skroce + Bud La Rosa) Electro is in even more trouble as the Black Tarantula turns the screw. Peter goes to live with his aunt Anna and then the trouble really begins. *[12/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Peter Parker, Spider-Man 79** (Howard Mackie & John Romita Jr) More details on Captain Stacy and his simply stunning daughter. Watch out Mary Jane, Peter's hormones are running rampant! *[19/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Sensational Spider-Man 15** (Todd DeZago & Mike Wieringo) Spidey and Ka-Zar team up to battle Roxxon and its bid to commercialise the Savage Land. *[05/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Spectacular Spider-Man 245** (J.M. DeMatteis & Luke Ross) The Chameleon and Spidey's war comes to a conclusion guaranteed to shock long-time readers. Dr Kafka begins a romance with a supporting cast member. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Spider-Man: Dead Man's Hand** (Roger Stern & Darick Robertson) The sequel to the **Hobgoblin Lives!** story as Carrion reveals his deadly plan. *[19/02/97]* $2.99

☐ **Untold Tales of Spider-Man 20** (Kurt Busiek & Pat Olliffe + Al Williamson) The Vulture versus Spider-Man from the bald old coot's perspective. *[12/02/97]* $0.99

☐ **Venom: On Trial 2** (of 3; Larry Hama & Josh Hood + Derek Fisher) Eddie has two options: stand trial before a jury, or smash his way out of a top security prison. Guess which one he chooses? *[26/02/97]* .. $1.95

X-Men family

☐ **Cable 42** (Todd DeZago & Randy Green + Scott Hanna) An old **X-Men** sub-plot is reworked with the arrival of a mysterious being talking of "The Twelve". Cable sees bad omens on the horizon. *[05/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Deadpool 4** (Joe Kelly & Ed McGuinness + Nathan Massengill) Deadpool is in need of a cure. He goes in search of Bruce Banner and ends up face to face with The Hulk. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Excalibur 108** (Ben Raab & Sal Larocca + Scott Koblish) The Dragons of the Crimson Dawn have arrived on Earth and what is their connection to Psylocke? *[19/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Generation X #26** (Scott Lobdell & Chris Bachalo + Mark Buckingham) The team flees for Muir Island but has to ditch its plane in the freezing Atlantic ocean. *[12/02/97]* $1.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Juggernaut** (Joe Kelly & Duncan Rouleau) A turning point in Cain Marko's life. He decides it's time to retire — unfortunately no one else knows this. *[26/02/97]* $2.99

CANCELLED ☐ **Professor Xavier & The X-Men 18** (Jorge Gonzalez & Tony Castrillo) The (represented) first battle between the Sentinels and the X-Men. *[12/02/97]* $0.99

☐ **Uncanny Origins 8** (Bill Rosemann & Marc Campos) The origin of Nightcrawler of Excalibur. *[05/02/97]* .. $0.99

☐ **Uncanny X-Men 343** (Scott Lobdell & Joe Madureira + Tim Townsend) Four X-Men journey through a stargate to help the Shi'Ar empire. Part two of the adventure. *[05/02/97]* ... $1.95

☐ **What If? 96** (Chris Wozniak) What if Quicksilver had been closer to his father? $1.95

☐ **Wolverine 112** (Larry Hama & Anthony Winn + Dan Green) Logan moves to New York and falls foul of a new menace. Dan Green, long-time inker on this and **The X-Men**, returns. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **X-Factor 133** (Howard Mackie & Jeff Matsuda + Art Thibert) The long-awaited reunion between Multiple Man (who's dead) and Strong Guy (who's been in a coma). *[12/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **X-Force 65** (John Francis Moore & Adam Pollina) Sunspot has a close encounter of the Askani kind. *[26/02/97]* . $1.95

☐ **X-Man 26** (Terry Kavanagh & Roger Cruz + Bud LaRosa) Can Moira MacTaggert stop Nathan's mind and body from falling apart? *[19/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **X-Men 63** (Scott Lobdell & Carlos Pacheco + Art Thibert) Shang-Chi and the mutants discover that Sebastian Shaw is one step ahead of them. . $1.95

NEW ☐ **X-Men: Lost Tales 1 & 2** (of 2; Chris Claremont & John Bolton) Hardly lost, more like just forgotten about. This two-issue series reprints the best back-up stories from the early days of **Classic X-Men**. *[05 & 19/02/97]* $1.95

Marvel licensed titles

☐ **A Clueless Valentine** (various & Sean Taggart) Special featuring the cast of the film *Clueless*. *[05/02/97]* $2.99

☐ **Star Trek: Deep Space 9 #6** (Howard Weinstein & Tom Grindberg) An alien race called The Shirn has handed a death sentence down to Sisko. *[12/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Star Trek: Early Voyages 3** (Dan Abnett + Ian Edgington & Patrick Zircher + Greg Adams) Captain Pike and the crew go boldly where no one has been before in the early days of Starfleet. *[26/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Star Trek: Star Fleet Academy 5** (Chris Cooper & Chris Renaud + Andy Lanning) The new recruits have to tackle a group of renegade Klingons on a desolate planet. But is it a test or the real thing? *[19/02/97]* $1.95

☐ **Star Trek: Voyager 6** (Ben Raab & Jesus Redondo) Voyager's crew is growing restless, so Janeway decides it's time for some relaxation. The problems is that tensions need to be expelled, but not against each other. *[05/02/97]* $1.95

MAXIMUM PRESS

☐ **Asylum 11** (Marat Mychaels) *Blindside* features in a solo adventure. $2.99

☐ **Avengelyne 10 & 11** (Rob Napton & John Stinsman) The toned-down heroine goes bi-weekly for the winter and is possessed by a blood-thirsty demon. $2.99

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Avengelyne: Armageddon 3** (of 3; Rob Liefeld & Rob Napton + Scott Clark + Chris Carlson) Avengelyne and a host of angels attempt to stop the end of the world. $2.99

NEW ☐ **Battlestar Galactica: The Compendium 1** (Rob Napton + Hector Gomez + Ching Lau & Rich Horie) Everything you wanted to know about Battlestar Galactica. $2.50

☐ **Cabbot: Bloodhunter 2** (Rick Veitch) Cabbot Stone — formerly known as Bloodstrike — is now the walking dead. Can he gain revenge over those that killed him? $2.50

NEW ☐ **Cybrid 1** (Mike Miller & Robert Napton) Cybrid attempts to gain revenge on those who transformed him into a walking machine. $2.99

☐ **Glory 20** (Jo Duffy & Jim Morrigan & Larry Stucker) Glory (now more discreetly dressed) teams up with her father to form an unlikely alliance. $2.50

☐ **Prophet & Cable 2** (Rob Liefeld) Maximum's immortal warrior and Marvel's mutant hard-case complete their time and dimension travelling adventure and fight against Kang. . . $3.50

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Shaft 1** (Rob Liefeld) A tale from the Youngblood member's past. $2.50

☐ **Supreme 46** (Alan Moore & ?) Who or what is Gorrl, the Living Galaxy? And who is Suprema? $2.50

OLYOPTICS

☐ **Armature 4** (of 6; Steve Oliff) Armature continues his quest aided by Redgy, the guide dog for the spiritually blind. Stiletto, the Man With No Arms is still wandering around in the background. $2.95

SIRIUS

☐ **Akiko 12** (Mark Crilley) Akiko and her friends find themselves on the outskirts of the planet Smoo's arctic circle. b&w 24pg $2.50

☐ **Demongate 10** (Bao Lin Hum + Colin Chan) Vic has turned the war with Peaches the Pirate into a mockery. b&w 24pg .. $2.50

☐ **Poison Elves 21** (Drew Hayes) Morachi and Talon argue about the stupidity of their recent actions and a shocking secret is discovered. b&w 24pg .. $2.50

☐ **Reality Check 6** (Tavicat) Anthropomorphic adventure series. 24pg $2.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Roel 1** (Roel) Spotlighting the skill of the South American artist.

Featuring a collection of his first work for the US comics market. b&w $2.95

FINAL ISSUE ☐ **Wandering Star 21** (Teri Sue Wood) The space-faring heroes meet their final fates as the alien invaders are about to conquer the universe.. b&w$2.50

TOPPS COMICS

☐ **Mars Attacks The Savage Dragon 3** (of 4; Dwight Zimmerman & Claude St Aubin) Tying in to Image's **Mars Attacks** crossover. The Dragon is turned literally into a giant dragon-like monster and proves to be a handful for the bumbling aliens. $2.95

☐ **The X-Files: Season One 8** (Roy Thomas & Val Mayerik) Adaptation of the first series continues. 48pg $3.95

☐ **The X-Files 27** (John Rozum & Charlie Adlard) Mully and Sculder investigate a group of terrorists who appear to be attempting to hijack an alien vessel. But if the government still refuses to acknowledge the existence of any aliens, how does the popular duo investigate the problem? $2.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **The X-Files: Afterflight Graphic Novel** (Stefan Petrucha & Jill Thompson) The first original **X-Files** graphic novel. An eccentric airship builder complains to the government that aliens are tampering with his work. Mulder visits the Texan to find out if there is any truth in his reports. 64pg 7" x 10" $5.95

VEROTIK

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Ge Rouge 1** (Glenn Danzig & Calvin Irving) Voodoo at the turn of the century. New Orleans is the setting for this tale of murder, intrigue and ritual religion on the bayous of Louisiana. There is a new threat to the voodoo king, Papa John — a young upstart with dark and twisted powers. Mature readers. $2.95

☐ **Satanika 7** (Glenn Danzig & Eric Canete) No specific story information. Mature. . . . $2.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Venus Domina — Candlemass Eve Special Edition** (Glenn Danzig + Ruthie Smith-Barlow & Duke Mighten + Eric Canete & Jesus Peneranda) A cover by Dave Stevens wraps around three stories of Verotik characters with a festively evil flavour. Mature readers. . $4.95

ONE-SHOT ☐ **Wingbird: Igrat X** (Glenn Danzig & Wingbird) Another helping of extreme Japanese Dojinshi madness. Hell's assassin Igrat is employed to work with the Devil and kill someone even Satan can't get his hands on. Limited edition — no second prints. Card covers. Mature readers. 40pg $4.95

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

☐ **Animerica Vol 5:2** (anthology magazine) Manga strips, anime interviews, news and reviews. 64pg. $4.95

☐ **Battle Angel Alita Part Seven #5** (of 8; Yukito Kishiro) Buick gives Koyomi a lesson in Barjack history. b&w . . . $2.95

☐ **Bio-Booster Armor Guyver Part 6 #3** (of 6; Yoshiki Takaya) The two Guyvers advance on the living spaceship. b&w . . $2.95

☐ **Fist of the North Star Part Four #3** (of 7; Tetsuo Hara + Reg Buronson) A masked man with seven scars on his chest terrorises a village. b&w . $2.95

☐ **Maison Ikkoku Part Six #7** (of 11; Rumiko Takahashi) Ibuki decides to throw a guerilla pyjama party. But it looks as if someone is out to ruin all her hard work. 40pg $2.95

☐ **No Need For Tenchi Part 2 #4** (of 7; Hitoshi Okuda) Tenchi and Ryoko battle against the evil genius Yakage. b&w . . . $2.95

☐ **Ranma ½ Part Six #3** (of 14; Rumiko Takahashi) Akane and Chinese Amazon Shampoo finish beating each other with wet noodles. b&w $2.95

☐ **Return of Lum, Part Three #10** (of 11; Rumiko Takahashi) Lum has to deal with her father's plans to marry her off to any eligible bachelor. $2.95

☐ **One-Pound Gospel Part Two #2** (of 8; Rumiko Takahashi) Sister Angela devises a mneumonic device to help her boxing buddy resist temptation. b&w $2.95

☐ **Sanctuary Part 5 #12** (of 13; Sho Fuminura & Ryoichi Ikegami) Bisset discovers the truth behind Asami's illness. Mature readers. 48pg b&w $3.50

WARP GRAPHICS

☐ **Elflord 2** (of 4; Barry Blair & Colin Chan) The wizard Greylone Worldstrider has aided the elfin travellers Hawk and Windblade to defeat the Srith. b&w $2.95

☐ **Elfquest 9** (Wendy Pini + Barry Blair & Steve Blevins + Mark Shelton + Jocellyn Aucklandus + various) Five new tales from the Elfquest worlds. Including new material from Wendy Pini and featuring characters such as Wolfrider, Rogues Curse and The Wild Hunt, b&w $4.95

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JAE LEE IN PERSON

JAE LEE was one of the comic industry's brightest young stars until he disappeared two years ago. Now he's back and **Comics International** has grabbed him for this exclusive interview.

Last issue, the magazine offered you, the readers, the opportunity to pose the questions for Jae to answer. And here's what you wanted to know...

JAE LEE IN PERSON: The Comics International readers' interview

*Bursting on to the comics scene at the age of 18, Jae Lee's first work was for **Marvel Comics Presents** #85, being the first episode of an 8-part Scott Lobdell Beast story. He then made the huge leap to replacing John Byrne as artist on the revamped **Namor** (#26-40), making the title an overnight collector's item.*

*Taking another giant step, he quit Marvel for the greener pastures of Image Comics, where he illustrated Jim Lee's **WildC.A.T.S Trilogy** before launching his own creation, **Hellshock** as a 4-part series, also for Image.*

*That was two years ago. He then disappeared from comics, only to recently reappear with the announcement that he is back with Image, and working on **Hellshock Volume 2...***

Your art is unique in style, but are there people who you would name as influences?
Bill Sienkiewicz, Dave McKean, Simon Bisley, Sean Philips, Joel Peter Witkin.

How long does it take to write and draw an entire issue of Hellshock?
Two years, apparently.

How come there has been such a long break since the last series?
I was busy doing research for the book. I've prepared a *huge* story arc. That's what took so long.

You produce a lot of cover artwork. How much do you get paid (on average) for covers?
Two chickens and an ox. We work on a barter system.

How much was Bill Sienkiewicz paid for the Hellshock 4 variant cover?
Three chickens and two cows.

How much effect did it have on the sales/print run of Hellshock with variant covers?
The alternate cover was 25% of the print run. As far as how it affected sales, I never looked into it.

Do you intend to do variant covers for the new Hellshock volume?
There is a variant cover for the new series available exclusively through Dynamic Forces.

Why was the original Hellshock scrapped? I know it was co-plotted by D. Charles Dill (who?). Did you two fall out?
It was scrapped because I didn't like it. No, we didn't have a falling out, but we did disagree on the focus of the book. He wanted more super-heroics, I wanted more supernatural.

What was the original Hellshock plot about?
Get this: It was about Daniel who was then a serial killer. An ageing cop tracks him down and in a fevered battle, the two manage to kill each other. Then, for some reason, they switch bodies and the cop comes back in the body of the serial killer. Doesn't make much sense does it? Why do you think it was scrapped.

I picked up an ashcan of sketches with early renditions of Hellshock (including some excellent unreleased work). Have any more ashcans like this been done for the new series of Hellshock?
No ashcans have been done for the new series as yet.

Where did you get the idea for Hellshock from, and what influenced it?
It came from years of religion shoved down my throat. It started out as being a somewhat sacrilegious book with the main character having a mean streak. But oddly enough, as I worked on the book and did some research, the book took a more spiritual tone. I see it now as being a very inspirational story. But of course in every inspirational story, the characters do have to be beaten down occassionally.

You once described your art style as "dark and violent" and "cinematic". Would you say this is still accurate?
Yes. It's more cinematic in the new series because I'm actually trying to do story-telling. It's also more realistic.

Did you always intend to create your own comic, or did you see yourself freelancing forever?
I kind of stumbled into the creator owned arena. I would like to go back and do some occasional freelance stuff though. It's much easier when it's someone else's neck on the chopping block.

Why did you leave Namor?
I was drowning and I couldn't swim.

How did you get your first work at Marvel?
I showed samples of my work at a New York comic convention. I met a writer who happened to like my stuff. I began to send him more sample pages until he thought it was strong enough to show around to the editors at Marvel. My first assignment was on Marvel Comics Presents.

Were you familiar with Namor before you started drawing it?
Yes. I always liked arrogant heroes.

Did you like John Byrne's version (of Namor)? And did you feel it risky to draw it so differently?
I loved everything John Byrne did. He was a god to me when I was growing up. I loved his FF and Alpha Flight stuff the best. In fact the main reason I did Namor was because Byrne was writing it. I was nervous about following him. I thought I'd get a lot of complaints because I changed him so much, but as it turned out the change was welcomed. If I were to do it again though, I'd draw him more faithful to the silver age Namor. Call it maturity, I guess.

What advice would you give to any aspiring artist?
Learn to draw from life. Sources other than comics. You've heard this before and you'll hear it again because it's true.

How old are you?
24 years old.

When you relax what are your favourite (a) comics to read (b) films to watch (c) TV to watch?
Comics: anything serious by Alan Moore. Film: Braveheart TV: Discovery channel, ER.

If you could be somebody else in the comics industry, who would you like to be?
Dave McKean.

Do you think the market has changed in the two years since the first Hellshock series?
Yes the market has changed. The fruits and vegetables are less fresh, prices have gone up and we have fewer customers.

Will the second series be very different to the first Hellshock mini?
VERY, VERY different. I've tried hard to grow as an artist and storyteller. I hope it shows in the new Hellshock series.

Do you think it was a mistake, leaving a two year gap?
Sometimes, but when I look at the work I'm doing now, I think that break was necessary for me to change.

Why has your art style changed since Namor and WildCATS Trilogy?
Why has it changed? Because if it never changed, it would become stagnant.

Do you intend to always write Hellshock or get other people involved as well?
I have no plans to get other writers or artists on board.

Thanks for supplying the questions go to CI readers:

Brian Appling, John Billington, Alan Cottingham, Mike Danks, Mark Ellingborough, Luke Jiraskova, D. Kahn, Bob Layzell, Iain McPherson, Vince Ng, D. Pommier, Roy Prior, Chris Rowlands & Gareth Tilley.

HELLSHOCK COMPETITION: 101 PRIZES

Jae Lee cover art and over £1000 worth of Hellshock #1 cover variants to be won!

On sale in January from Image Comics is Hellshock volume 2 #1 which sees the return of Jae Lee's well-received 1994 series.

To celebrate the return of Jae Lee and Hellshock, Dynamic Forces, the comic industry's leading producer of signed and numbered comics, is offering Comics International readers the chance to win the Jae Lee original Hellshock artwork pictured below.

In addition, no less than 100 competition entrants will receive a copy of the Hellshock alternate cover, a Dynamic Forces exclusive. Each copy will be signed by Jae Lee.

New Jersey-based Dynamic Forces, founded by company president Nick Barruci, has expanded its operation to include trading cards, phone cards, signed prints, posters, and T-shirts. It has also recently established the Top Cow Comics fan club and organised the October New York comics convention, and regularly presents the comics slot on QVC in Britain and the Home Shopping Network in Canada.

CUT OUT COUPON ALONG DOTTED LINE

Circle the correct answers from the following four questions:

Which title featured Jae Lee's first published work?
a) DC Comics Presents
b) Marvel Comics Presents
c) Dark Horse Presents

Who did Jae Lee replace on Namor?
a) John Byrne
b) Warlord Krang
c) Lady Dorma

What title did Jae Lee take on after leaving Namor?
a) WildC.A.T.S Adventures
b) WildC.A.T.s Sourcebook
c) WildC.A.T.s Trilogy

Dynamic Forces hosts a regular TV comics home-shopping programme... for which channel?
a) BBC2
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All entries must be postmarked before February 28th 1997

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BRITISH COMICS/ANNUALS (pre-1965):

Dandy, Beano, Eagle, Knockout, Wizard, Adventure, Lion, Rover, etc

BRITISH POCKET BOOKS (pre-1965):

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hOTSHOTS

Every month ***Comics International*** *picks ten new titles from the issues's news and advance listings. Will they be big sellers, hot titles or overstocks destined for the 10p bins in a year? Only time and sales will tell!*

☺ Drakuun: Rise of the Dragon Princess 1

(Dark Horse Manga; Johji Manabe; $2.95)

Not the most obvious of choices for a Hotshots entry, but Johji Manabe has built up a solid reputation with his Dark Horse series **Outlanders** and this new title combines the dynamics of **Outlanders** with a smattering of SF and good girl art. A must for manga fans, but it could also tempt a few new readers to sample Dark Horse's manga line. *Prediction:* Sadly, limited, but with great potential if pushed by retailers.

☺ Manga Shi 2000 #1

(Crusade; Bill Tucci & Dan Mishkin + various; $2.95)

Where the conventional manga of the above **Drakuun** series might not appeal, this manga-styled version of one of comics' hottest properties has a wider potential through its mainstream comics audience. But already damaged by the current **Daredevil/Shi** disappointment, Tucci could easily fall between the two distinct audiences with insufficient appeal for either. *Prediction:* Caution is recommended.

☺ Marvel Adventures 1

(Marvel; Ralph Macchio & Andy Kuhn + Rob Still; $1.50)

Although it is aimed at new young readers, there is a definite appeal among fans for **Batman & Robin Adventures** style comics, with DC's **Adventures in the DC Universe** beginning next month. *Prediction:* If not carefully handled, it could miss both kid and adult audience.

☺ The Shade 1

(DC; James Robinson & Gene Ha; $2.25)

James Robinson and DC have collected some top name artists for this **Starman** spin-off. Strong storytelling and unique artwork has made **Starman** a big success and this mini-series is likely to be as popular. *Prediction:* With its current hot artists, it should be in big demand.

☺ Star Wars: Dark Forces - Soldier For The Empire

(Dark Horse; William Dietz & Dean Williams; $24.95)

Expensive and not even a comic book, but sure to appeal to die-hard Star Wars fans everywhere. Doubtful it will appeal outside of the genre, but Dark Horse's last soiree into Graphic Story Albums (**Aliens: Tribes**) was a huge success. *Prediction:* A by-order only one for retailers not wanting the risk, so the print run should be low.

☺☺ The Tenth 1

(Image; Tony Daniel + Beau Smith & Kevin Conrad; $2.50)

Tony Daniel has made his name as a solid penciller on **X-Force** and most recently **Spawn**. His writing ability is now being tested in this superhero cum horror title which is is sure to attract a lot of early attention. *Prediction:* After a high launch run, later cut-back issues will hold the key to profits for speculators.

☺ Thunderbolts 1

(Marvel; Kurt Busiek & Mark Bagley; $2.95)

Busiek seemingly can do no wrong, what with the success of **Marvels** and **Astro City**, but this is mainstream Marvel and being viewed as a replacement for **The Avengers** and **The Fantastic Four**. A lot rests on Mark Bagley's pencils. *Prediction:* If Bagley continues to produce the solid work he did on **New Warriors**, this could be a hit.

☺☺ Unknown Soldier 1

(DC/Vertigo; Garth Ennis & Killian Plunkett; $2.50)

Ennis continues to turn everything he touches to gold and this is likely to be no exception. *Prediction:* The first of Ennis's DC war hero revamps, it is likely to be well patronised by fans of good storytelling, but it will be ordered highly, so multiple copy hoarding is to be avoided.

☺☺☺ WildC.A.T.s/X-Men 1

(Image; Scott Lobdell & Travis Charest + various; $4.50)

This month's guaranteed success. Travis Charest, who has rapidly become one of comics' top names, provides the plot for Scott Lobdell and this may even rival Amalgam and **DC versus Marvel** in sales. *Prediction:* It could prove to be a nightmare for retailers when they decide how many they are going to order. Expect overordering.

☺☺ The X-Files: Afterflight Graphic Novel

(Topps; Stefan Petrucha & Jill Thompson; $5.95)

This first **X-Files** original graphic novel. Guaranteed to be a big seller with Petrucha's always top rate feel for the series, ably aided by Vertigo's Jill Thompson. *Prediction:* Not an investment item, but will have a long shelf-life, and be a safe bet for beleaguered retailers.

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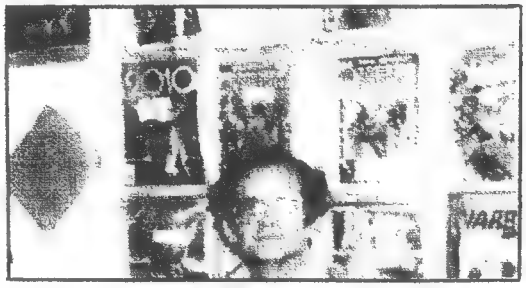

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INFORMATION

● **ADMISSION PRICES**
We're very sorry to have to raise our admission prices for the first time since 1988.
Advance booking prices: £20 for the weekend, or **£12.50** per day.
On the door they'll be £25 for the weekend or £17.50 per day. It pays to apply in advance!
Free entrance to anyone under 14 if accompanied by an adult aged 18 or over
● **ACCOMMODATION** We will send you information of nearby cheap accommodation. The average price is £25 per night and includes breakfast. Rooms are limited, so please apply early.
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● You'll get a chance to obtain autographs and sketches from many of our guests.

● The whole weekend will be jam-packed with events. There will be many panels featuring advertised guests and we hope a few surprises as well.

● On sale will be thousands of old and new comics, as well as original artwork, merchandise, trading cards and other related items.

● The winners of the UK Comic Art Awards will be announced.

● Throughout the weekend we'll also be giving away prizes in various quizzes and contests.

SPECIAL EVENT

JOE KUBERT ART CLASSES

Please note: For practical reasons we have had to make a few changes to the classes than previously announced.
Joe Kubert will be giving two art classes at UKCAC97. There will only be room for 20 people to take these classes, but they will be free, with the lucky pupils being selected by a random draw on the advance application deadline day, Monday 24th February. Winners will be notified by post thereafter. To qualify you will have to conform to the following conditions:
1. You must have made an advance booking for UKCAC97 and be able to attend both classes – one on Saturday and the other on Sunday.
2. You must register your intention to attend the classes by ticking the appropriate box on the application form.
3. You must supply your own drawing materials including pad, pencils and pens.
4. You must also bring along a small mobile drawing board or something where you can place your drawing paper at an angle. A flat surface won't allow you to achieve the proper perspective. We will store your equipment overnight for you.

FANCY DRESS CONTEST

Be part of the biggest event of the weekend!
● Categories for winners will include: most realistic costume, most original costume, best technical costume, best cross-dresser, best young fan's costume, best group effort, silliest costume. Plus loads more, and of course the BEST OVERALL COSTUME – which will go to an solo entrant or someone from a group.
● **Anyone who enters the contest will either get a choice of a £15 refund or a video of the contest itself!**
● The contest will be held on Saturday afternoon.

Please send the coupon (or a copy of it) below, along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to:
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Please note that all guests mentioned on this advert have confirmed that they will be attending the convention. UKCAC97 cannot assume responsibility for any cancellations. All illustrations copyright © their respective publishers or creators

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● Advance booking deadline is **Monday, February 24th, 1997**

Please tick this box if you do not want to be on the UKCAC mailing list ☐

CARD NEWS

*Few comic shop owners would deny that collectors now consider trading cards and customisable card games (CCGs) a key part of the market. As such, **Comics International** features Card News each issue, looking at news in the non-sports area of this growing hobby.*

X marks the spot

FLEER Entertainment is releasing a new series of ***X-Men*** trading cards in March.

The new set combines artwork from the **X-Men** comics with images from the *X-Men* animated TV series and also features randomly inserted temporary tattoos and holografix chase cards.

Chromium reprints

RARELY do trading cards prove so successful that sets have to be reprinted. The exception to the rule is the re-issuing of the ***Gen¹³ Chromium*** cards set.

Originally released in 1995, this 107 card set, with an 18 card chase set, has gone back to the presses and is being reproduced in a more affordable regular format. The re-issue will feature an all-new ***Gen¹³*** nine card subset which slots into the ***Wildstorms Expandable Super-Hero Collectible Card Game***.

Now called ***Gen¹³ Classic Trading Cards***, the set includes the artwork of many of Image's top artists as well as a number of top creators working for other comics publishers. These include regular **Gen¹³** artist J. Scott Campbell plus Travis Charest, Adam Hughes, Jae Lee, Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane, Dan Norton, Whilce Portacio, Humberto Ramos, Trevor Scott, Bruce Timm and Mike Wieringo.

The card backs feature story details from regular writer Brandon Choi. As with the original release, chase cards will be randomly inserted. The series is on sale in March and each pack contains eight cards.

Empire cards

DARK Horse's **Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire** was a comic series that bridged the gap between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *The Return of the Jedi*.

Coming in March, from Metallic Impressions, is a six-card metal set featuring each of Hugh Fleming's cover paintings for the comics series. The card backs reproduce an actual panel from the comic with narrative relating to that particular issue.

Each card is individually bagged and all are packaged in a metal embossed collector box.

Lethal chromium

TRAINED by the crime lord Roman Von Drake to become his premier assassin, Jacklyn Mitchell is better known as Stryke, the evil sister and bitter enemy of London Night Studios' top super-heroine Razor.

A new 35-card set from Krome Productions features art by London Night artists and guest artists from many of the leading comics companies.

Special chase card subsets include six NecroChrome cards, two PhotoChrome and two parallel HoloChrome cards.

23 Karat Trek

BLEACHERS has combined a photocard with a gold sculptured card for a memorable collectable for *Star Trek* afficionados.

The ***Star Trek: First Contact 23KT Gold Sculptured Card*** features an image of the *Star Trek: First Contact* movie poster on the front and a 23 Karat gold layered back.

Limited to 10,000 and complete with a certificate of authenticity, this special commemorative card comes in a clear acrylic card holder and a foil stamped box.

Variant phone card

ONE of the hottest comics on sale is **Witchblade** #10 cover variant.

Dynamic Entertainment is to release a special variant edition phone card which features the Dynamic Forces variant cover with full colour artwork by Michael Turner and D-Tron.

Every fourth card will be a variant — with a second logo colour. Regular cards are limited to 10,000, variants to 2,500.

Each card has five minutes of phone time (USA only) and is valid for one year. Available singularly or as part of a special pack which contains three regular cards plus one variant.

Single cards cost $5.00 while the packs are priced at $20.

This phone card completes a set — which also includes ***Arcanum #1, Witchblade #3, Darkness #3, Weapon Zero #1, Cyberforce #1 & #3*** — from Marc Silvestri's Top Cow.

Deviant cards

WARREN Ellis and Humberto Ramos' hit Image series **DV8** is being released as a new 90-card set from Wildstorm Productions.

Featuring all new artwork from Ramos, Tom Raney, Aaron Wiesenfeld, Tomm Coker, Joe Phillips, Randy Green and **Gen¹³**'s J. Scott Campbell, the series ships in March with a number of nine-card subsets.

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THE FIRST NATIONAL COMICS AWARDS

The votes are pouring in, the front runners are nosing ahead, and interesting trends are starting to develop. But don't worry, it's not too late to overturn Billy The Fish's bizarre lead in the Most Missed Character category. Votes don't have to be in until Feb 28th.

Remember, every single call to vote for the **Best British Comic Ever** Award on **0891 22 44 22** raises money for ChildLine's 10th Anniversary Appeal, so just for once you can ballot-stuff in a good cause.

For all the other categories, complete this ballot form, or a photocopy, and mail it to **The National Comics Awards**, c/o Comics International, 8 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ.

All the National Comics Awards or, if you will, **The Jimmies** (go on, ask me Why Jimmy?) are presented in London on Saturday March 15th, on which subject scoot on down to the foot of the page. Now.

SPECIAL CATEGORY

The Best British Comic Ever - Phone Poll. Vote On 0891 22 44 22

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Best Artist

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Best Comic (British)

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Best Comic (International)

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Best Self Published/Independent

Award sponsored by **Tripwire Magazine**

Best Character

Award sponsored by **Incognito Comics**

The SFX Award for Best New Comic of 1996 (British)

Award sponsored by **SFX Magazine**

Comics International Award for Best New Comic of 1996 (International)

Award sponsored by **Comics International**

Best Supporting Character

Most Missed Character, Strip or Comic

Best Individual Story of 1996

Best Cover of 1996

Diamond PREVIEWS Award for Best Specialist Comics Publication

Award sponsored by **Diamond Comic Distributors**

Best Newspaper Strip

The Diamond Star System Award for Best comic based Film/TV

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In the case of overbooking, cheques will be returned immediately and **all applicants** will receive an invite to the **After Show Party** (admission will be for over-18s only) Party animals can book rooms at The Russel on 0171 837 6470.

NEWS
·EUROPE·

Titan expands graphic novel line

WITH Boxtree having severely cut back on its book collections of US Marvel comics, Titan Books has filled the market gap with an expanded line of of its own trade paperback compilations and graphic novels.

In addition to its existing line of Fleetway, *Star Trek, The Simpsons*, DC and Dark Horse Comics, it has recently added *The X-Files* and **Spawn**.

Scheduled for release in Spring is the largest lineup in the company's history.

The X-Files: Following the winter publication of the three £9.99 books, **Firebird**, **Project Aquarius** and **The Haunting**, and the £6.99 digest format **Dead to the World** comes the March release of the £9.99 **The X-Files: Night Lights** by John Rozum. The book also features a special back-up story by best-selling **X-Files** writer Kevin J. Anderson, author of **X-Files: Ground Zero** and **Ruins**.

Spawn: Todd McFarlane's top US comics character now has UK compilations of early issues, with Titan's **Spawn Volume I** (#1-4 reprints) and **II** (the Moore, Miller and Gaiman issues #8-10) on sale February, priced £7.99.

Aliens: The line increases to 11 titles with the February launch of two Mark Verheiden-written £11.99 trade paperbacks: **Aliens: Nightmare Asylum** (drawn by Denis Beauvais) reprints the second **Aliens** mini-series. **Aliens: Female War**, drawn by Sam (**The Maxx**) Kieth, is an updated edition revised to align the story with the movies and novelisations.

SF: Titan's line, with **Babylon 5**, **Star Wars** and **Star Trek**, expands to include the new **Space: Above and Beyond** in a £8.99 Topps graphic novel by ex-Marvel stalwart Roy Thomas.

Batman reaches a staggering 28 trade paperbacks with the March release of the £10.99 **Batman: Legacy** by Grant, Moench and Dixon and the May on sale **Dark Knight Returns** 10th anniversary softcover edition of Frank Miller's seminal work. This new £24.95 edition, currently only in hard-cover, contains 28 new pages and new cover art by Miller.

Superman increases to 13 titles, with **The Death of Clark Kent**, priced £8.99, on sale May.

Pitched at a more mature readership, Titan's spring launch graphic novels include **The Crow: Dead Time** (O'Barr & Wagner, £6.99, 2/97); **Hitman** (Ennis & McCrea, £6.99, 3/97), **Preacher: Until the End of the World** (Ennis & Dillon, £9.99, 3/97); **Books of Magic: Reckonings** (Rieber & various, £8.99, 4/97) and **The Sandman: The Wake** (Gaiman & Zulli tying up loose ends, £19.99, 2/97).

On the humour front, two new £6.99 Simpsons trade paperbacks are lined up: **Simpsons Comics Strike Back** (Groening, 2/97) and **Simpsons Comics Winding** (Groening, 6/97).

IN BRIEF

Judge Dredd gets facelift

IN A PUBLIC about-face and giving a boost to the only UK mature-readers newsstand comic, Fleetway's **Judge Dredd Megazine** has received a total visual revamp at the hands of new designer Gary Knight while editor David Bishop has cut down on reprints and added six pages of new material.

The current issue (volume 3, #26) introduces John Smith and Siku's 85 page Dredd epic, *Fetish* with a 17 page episode, as well as a new *Missionary Man* story (by Gordon Rennie and SB Davis) and the new series *The Inspectre*, drawn by **The X-Files'** Charlie Adlard.

Tripwire cuts

FOLLOWING its successful US debut, the comics and music magazine **Tripwire** goes through a comprehensive revamp after its £2.50 fifth anniversary issue (#16) in March, focusing on Scottish artist Frank Quitely.

In June, #17 will be the first comic-sized issue. Retaining its page count of 48, the title will drop to 99p, allowing its US price to fall from $3.95 to a competitive $1.75.

Behind a Matt Wagner full-colour cover, the main interview will focus on Wagner's new **Mage II** title.

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ADVANCE LISTINGS: UK

With the majority of UK-produced comics, trade paperbacks and graphic novels not readily available, the following listing of material to be published next month gives readers the opportunity to order specific titles through newsagents, bookshops or specialist outlets. As such, only titles nationally distributed through federated news outlets are included. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers. Late shipping, cancellations and changes in content will be detailed in future issues of ***Comics International.*** *Compiled by Kerry-Ann Hurley*

Key to abbreviations used:

1 & 2 + 3	=	*Writer & penciller + inker*
wkly	=	*weekly frequency*
ftnly	=	*fortnightly frequency*
mthly	=	*monthly frequency*
o/s	=	*oversized, larger than A4*
dgst	=	*small, approx A5 sized*
sqbd	=	*perfect bound; squared spine; without staples*
b&w	=	*black & white contents*
clr	=	*full colour contents*
pc	=	*part-colour contents*
gn	=	*graphic novel*
thbk	=	*trade hardback edition*
tpbk	=	*trade paperback, squarebound, comic size*
Xpgs	=	*number of interior pages*
Mature	=	*recommended for mature readers, may contain nudity, sex and/or extreme violence.*

TITLES ON SALE: FEBRUARY

A & C BLACK

O **Cartoonist's Workbook** (tpbk; Robin Hall) Outlining the basic essentials of creative cartooning. Includes examples of techniques for freehand drawing, composition, perspective and caricatures, plus advice on how to get your work published. 112pgs b&w £12.99

ARF CARTOONS

O **Smut: The Alternative Comic 77** (mthly; various) Adult humour comic strips featuring Roy Chubby Brown, The Booze Bros and others. Mature. 40pgs pc £1.50

DC THOMSON

O **Beano 2846-2849** (wkly; various) Humour strips including: Dennis the Menace and Gnasher and Minnie the Minx. 24pgs clr £0.42

O **Beano Comic Library Monthly 357-358** (2 per mth; dgst; various) Extra-long strips featuring the **Beano** characters. 68pgs pc £0.55

O **Beano Superstars 62** (mthly; various) One complete full-length strip per issue. 36pgs clr £1.10

O **Bunty 2038-2041** (wkly; various) Picture and photo stories plus features for girls. 32pgs pc £0.60

O **Bunty Picture Library 436-437** (2 per mth; dgst; various) A full-length reprint comic strip each issue. 68pgs b&w £0.55

O **Classics from the Comics 10** (mthly; various) Reprinting classic DC Thomson strips from the past. 68pg b&w £1.20

O **Commando Action & Adventure Stories 3019-3026** (8 per mth; dgst; various) War strips set mostly in World War II. 68pgs b&w £0.55

O **Dandy 2881-2884** (wkly; various) Humour anthology including regulars: Desperate Dan and Korky the Cat. 24pgs clr £0.42

O **Dandy Comic Library Monthly 333-334** (2 per mth; various) Extra long strips of the favourite **Dandy** characters. 68pgs pc £0.55

O **Football Picture Story Monthly 257-258** (2 per mth; various) Comic strip soccer stories. 68pgs pc £0.55

O **Mandy & Judy 299-302** (wkly; various) Comic strips plus features and pet pin-ups. 32pgs pc £0.60

O **Mandy & Judy Picture Library 258-259** (2 per mth; dgst; various) One full-length comic story per issue. 68pg b&w £0.55

FELDON PRODUCTIONS

O **Sweet FA 21** (now bi-mthly, various) Football humour comic strips and spoof newspaper-style articles. Mature. 52pgs pc £1.25

FLEETWAY EDITIONS

O **Ace Ventura Pet Detective 5** (mthly; various) Ace Ventura in super sleuth spoof stories, farcical film clips and sniggersome sketches! clr ... £1.20

O **Buster 53-54** (ftnly; various) Humour comic strips starring Buster, Chalky and other regulars. 32pgs clr ... £1.00

O **Disney's Big Time 8 & 9** (ftnly; various) Magazine format including articles, puzzles, photos and Disney comic strips. 52pgs clr £1.20

O **Judge Dredd Megazine Vol 3 #27** (mthly; various) Anthology concluding: *The Inspectre: Baptism of Fire* (Campbell + Walker & Gillespie). With the continuation of *Judge Dredd: Fetish* (Smith & Siku); *Missionary Man: Night of the Hunter* (Rennie & S.B. Davis); and *Necropolis* (Wagner & Ezquerra). 44pgs clr .. £2.00

O **Sonic the Comic 96-97** (ftnly; various) Features, computer game reviews and games related comic strips. 36pgs clr £1.20

O **Tom & Jerry 36** (mthly; various) Comic strip humour from the cat and mouse duo. 44pgs clr £1.25

O **2000AD 1029-1032** (wkly; various) Anthology featuring: *Judge Dredd: Darkside* (Smith & Marshall); *Slaine* (Mills & Power); *Sinister Dexter* (Abnett & S. B. Davis); *Vector 13* (various) and *Janus: Faustus* (G. Morrison + Millar & P. Johnson). 36pgs clr .. £1.10

JOHN BROWN PUBLICATIONS

O **Viz 82** (bi-monthly; various) Adult humour featuring Biffa Bacon, Fat Slags, Sid the Sexist, Cockney Wanker and all the other regulars. Mature. 52pgs pc £1.40

LITTLE BROWN

O **Julius Knipl: Real Estate Photographer Stories** (tpbk; Katchor) A collection of stark, realistic comic strips by Ben Katchor which mix weirdness and dank atmosphere with humour. Oddities run rampant through the pages, including in one story, grown men collecting lipstick-stained cigarette butts! b&w £10.50

THE MAG FACTORY

O **Zit 76** (mthly; various) Adult humour comic strips featuring Drugs Den, Dirty Stan and others. Mature. 48pgs pc £1.50

MAI COMICS

O **Spit 50** (mthly; various) Adult humour strips with Teenage Mum, Ugly Dudley, The Twats Nextdoor and others. Mature. 52pgs pc £1.35

MARVEL (UK)

O **Action Man 6** (4-wkly; various) Comics adventures of the toy soldier. 24pgs clr £1.25

O **Amazing X-Men 14** (4-wkly; various) Reprinting various tales from Marvel US's **Generation X** and **X-Men** titles. 44pgs clr £1.25

O **Astonishing Spider-Man 18** (4-wkly; various) Reprints three

Marvel US Spider-Man titles. 72pgs clr £1.99

O Doctor Who Magazine 249 (mthly; various) Features, news, plus a new comic strip. 52pgs pc £2.95

O Essential X-Men 18 (4-wkly; various) Anthology reprinting stories from US X-Men titles, plus features. 72pgs clr £1.99

O Rug Rats 16 & 17 (ftnly; various) Comic strips and features based on the Nickelodeon Sky TV series. 24pgs clr £0.75

O Spectacular Spider-Man 18 (4-wkly; various) Reprint of an issue of a Marvel US Spider-Man title. 36pgs clr .. £1.25

O Wolverine Unleashed 6 (4-wkly; various) Reprinting Marvel US strips of the most popular X-Men character. 76pgs clr £1.99

THE REDAN COMPANY

O I Love to Read Batman 22 (mthly; various) Comic strips, games and posters, etc featuring DC heroes. 32pgs clr . £1.15

TITAN BOOKS

O Aliens: Genocide (tpbk; Arcudi & Willis + Story) A new edition, updated and revised with a painted cover by John Bolton. Daniel Grant embarks upon a reckless and dangerous mission to obtain rare Alien jelly on a world overrun by warring Aliens. 112pgs clr £11.99

O The Books of Magic: Reckonings (tpbk; Rieber & Gross + Snejberg + Ridgway) The fourth collection of DC Vertigo's **Books of Magic** ongoing series. Continuing the story of trainee magician Timothy Hunter, who journeys to Hell to rescue his kidnapped girlfriend. 160pgs clr . £10.99

O The Crow: Dead Time (tpbk; O'Barr + Wagner) An all-new tale of the avenging angel is packaged into a graphic novel format in a story which shows time is no barrier. 96pgs b&w £6.99

O Spawn Volume 1 (tpbk; MacFarlane) Al Simmons has been to hell and back, literally. Five years after his death, he is reanimated as Spawn, disfigured beyond recognition and possessing demonic superpowers. Desperate to see his wife, Simmons has made a deal with the Devil which has cost him his soul. Mature. 120pgs clr £7.99

O Spawn Volume 2 (tpbk; MacFarlane + Gaiman + Miller + Moore & MacFarlane) As his fragmented psyche starts to mend, ex-government agent Al Simmons begins to piece together events leading to his murder. But a cyborg, code-named Overtkill, has been hired by someone to send Simmons back to hell. Mature. 120pgs clr £7.99

O The X-Files: Night Lights (tpbk; Anderson + Rozum & Adlard + Purcell + Rubinstein) When a World War II pilot — lost in the Bermuda Triangle over 40 years ago — suddenly reappears, unaffected by the passage of time, Mulder and Scully and called upon to investigate the bizarre theory of atmospheric life forms. 128pgs clr £9.99

TITAN MAGAZINES

O Gargoyles 5 (mthly; various) Featuring a full length action/adventure strip based on the new animated TV series showing on GMTV. Xanataos' plan to create his own gargoyles nears fruition, while Goliath and friends face unexpected dangers in New York. 32pgs clr £1.20

O Manga Mania 41 (now bi-mthly; various) The latest anime and manga news. Includes features on Japanese animation and Hong Kong cinema plus manga comic strips. 132pgs pc £2.50

O The Mask Adventures 13 (4-wkly; Eury & Vokes + Geldhof + Webb) Featuring a full length comic strip, posters, puzzles, games and competitions. 32pgs clr ... £1.20

O The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest 5 (mthly; various) Reprinting a full length comic strip with puzzles, posters, character profiles and TV episode guides. 32pgs clr £1.20

O Star Trek Monthly 25 (mthly, various) Featuring a behind-the-scenes guide to the making of the present day *Star Trek*, plus interviews with Michael Okuda and Michael Westmore, comic strips and the latest *Star Trek* news. 68pgs clr £3.15

O X-Files 22 (mthly; various) Comic strips starring the FB1 agents plus news, features, interviews and programme guides. Also includes snippets on the new *Millenium* series. 36pgs clr £1.50

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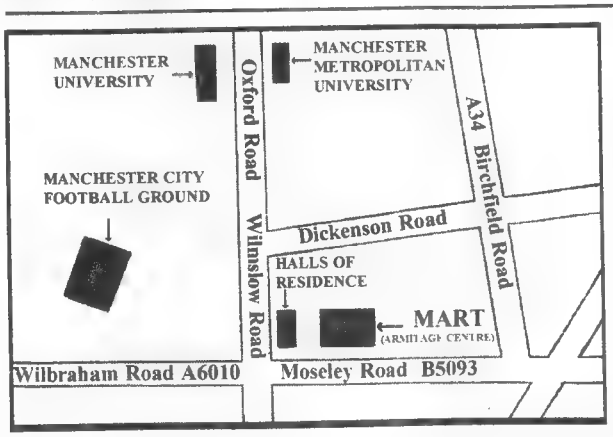

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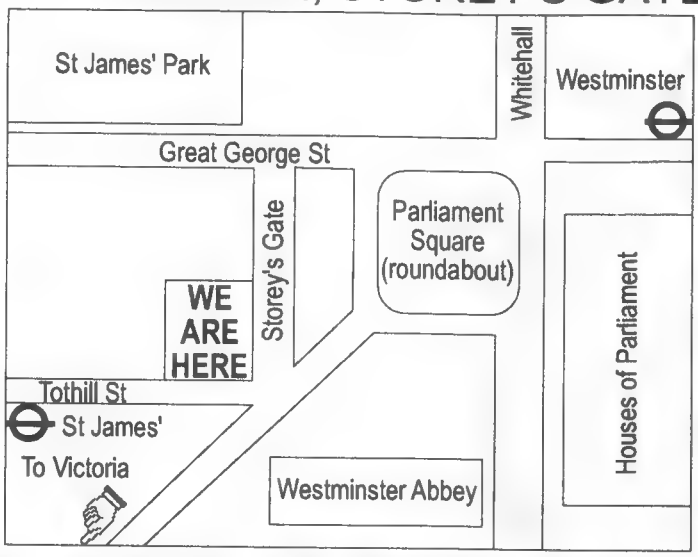

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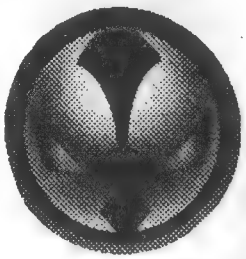

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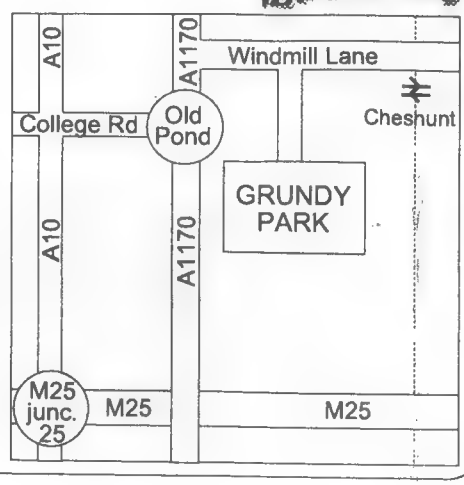
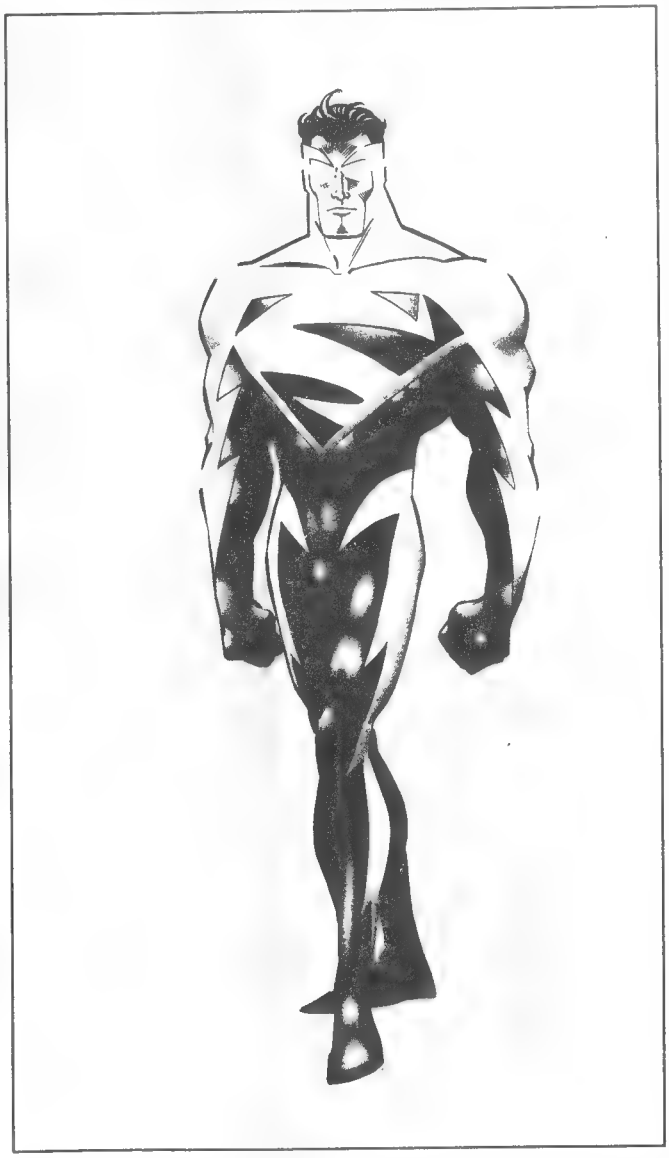


MEDIA FILE

Associate editor Sarah Bolesworth looks at media coverage of comics and related product



MARVEL Entertainment's bankruptcy made the headlines in this months' business pages, plunging pundits into despair about the industry's future.

DC, meanwhile, scored a heavy-hitting media victory with the launch of Superman's new costume and powers.

Fleet Street reacted to New Supes with gusto — except **The Sunday Times**, which published on December 29 a *Superman* film still, showing the traditional costume. Others with the same lack of regard for accuracy trotted out the same *Is it a bird, is it a plane?* nonsense with the odd *Pow!* and a dose of cod psychology to fill space.

"Perhaps," quavered **The Times**, "as a result of a fulfilled emotional life, Superman seemed to lose his touch [3.1.97]."

For "emotional", in the genteel world of a century ago to which **The Times** cleaves, read sexual.

What DC's Mike Carlin said in the same piece was that Supes' powers had "dwindled away" after his marriage to Lois Lane. "He tried to boost his energies and his powers and all these things [his 1992 death and the wedding] combined to alter him," said Carlin helpfully.

But the kit-and-confidence story is perhaps more complicated than that. A hint of Samson-meets-Delilah sets the scene for Superman's dwindling, evoking the ancient but ironically potent superstition that sex the night before a big fight/game drains a sportsman's energy. And Lois and Superman are still safely inside legal boundaries.

With this improbable but effective mechanism — and what can only be called one quantum leap — DC was free to bring about the regeneration of parent company Time Warners' highest revenue-earner.

Spun in Marvel's web

MANY news desks took copy from the wire agencies this month for their Marvel bankruptcy reports. Data from such sources is often based on press releases, and Marvel Entertainment's spin was reflected in the coverage.

But there were exceptions to the reams of copy blaming dog-in-the-manger shareholders and "vultures" preying on the stricken company. **The Economist** (4.1.97) warned: "The ostensible reason [for bankruptcy] is the foolish expansion into trading cards... But behind the scenes is an epic financial battle worthy of one of Marvel's own comics."

The **Wall Street Journal** was unequivocal about Ronald Perelman's malign influence (30.12.96), citing the majority shareholder's admission, through a spokesman, that hearings in bankruptcy court to approve the Perelman plan began as early as March last year.

Hello, good evening and bollocks

It was with the above, apt greeting that **The Guardian**'s Brian Logan began his review of the BBC Radio 1 documentary on the history of **Viz** magazine.

The premise for the programme was **Viz**'s 18th anniversary. Logan's headline summed up his opinion of it: *Unfeasibly large.*

Viz — The Rock and Roll Years was, said Logan, "an entertaining if uncritical history of giggling millionaire Chris Donald's once proud but now shrivelled organ". Targeting the show's editorial, Logan abandoned laconic satire and got out the knives.

"The extent of **Viz**'s cultural significance, it seems, is that it inspired **Loaded**," wrote Logan. "There was no suggestion, meanwhile, that the comic might also be offensive, juvenile or — whisper it — not funny."

Amis on comics

MARTIN Amis, cultural guru to a generation and beneficiary of a controversial £500,000 advance on his latest novel, **The Information**, had his literary grounding in comics.

Interviewed this month on BBC Radio 4, Amis quietly replied to an amused question about his sole literary interest during his teens: "Oh yes, I read comics. And then I re-read them. In fact there was a time when I read nothing else." Amis's lack of belly-scraping embarrassment dumbfounded the interviewer, who hastily moved on to the next question.

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FRAME TO FRAME

Examining the interaction between comics and films, this month's column takes a long overdue look at the current workload of Brendan McCarthy, last reported on in October 1993's CI Preview Special

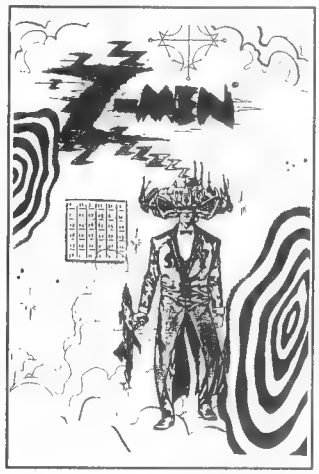
BRENDAN McCarthy, the infamous creator and artist behind such titles as **Skin**, **Rogan Gosh**, and **Mirkin the Mystic**, has been very active lately, though not, alas, in the field of comics.

Two of his movie projects have been optioned and are now being developed in Hollywood.

Down with the Z-Men

Horrorville and *Z-Men* are to be given the full treatment and turned into big budget features.

McCarthy describes the films as, "Two commercial genre movies — *Horrorville* is an action horror flick: *Gormenghast* meets *Mad Max*, very gothic and very weird..."



"*Z-Men* is the project that languished at DC Comics for years... I finally sold it as a movie — I think I made more money from selling it as an option than I would have from drawing the whole comic — and I've still held onto the comic book/graphic novel rights. It's a '60s flavoured espionage yarn; *Fantastic Voyage* meets *Performance*, if you can conjour that up!"

Designing Reboot

McCarthy has recently returned from Vancouver where he was production designer for the third season of the number one rated computer animated TV series, *Reboot*.

Says McCarthy, "This third season of *Reboot* will be the best yet — technically it should improve on the previous series because we now have shadows and cinematic-style lighting. Also the scripts are much "harder" and the show is being pitched to an older "teen" audience."

"I've created a whole new world for the *Reboot* Universe... and a whole bunch of new characters who may even spin-off into their own series... sort of *Deep Space Nine* from *Star Trek*."

With Ian Pearson, the original creator of *Reboot*, McCarthy has created a television series for the new Adult Animation market. It is currently being developed as a one-hour prime-time computer animated series.

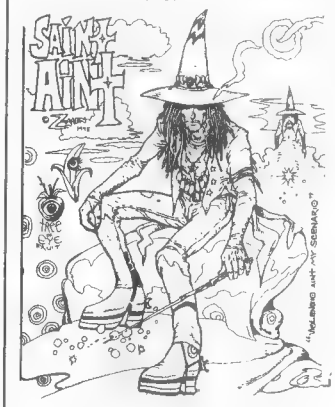
The producers of *Reboot* have also bought a new CGI series from McCarthy, to be produced as an *Adventures of Batman* styled show; the world's first computer-generated super-hero. McCarthy seemed reluctant to discuss this project in detail as he "doesn't want it swiped."

Comics in the future

With all his film and television work, is it likely that the self-styled Sultan of Sequential Art will ever draw comics again? Quoth he, "Of course I will produce comic books, but first I want to make sure that I have enough money behind me so that I can self-publish the material I choose."

"I'm getting too long in the cock to have silly people telling me how to produce my own work. There's just too much crap to put up with, and quite frankly, I can't be bothered with it."

It sounds like he will be creating his own small-scale comic books in the future. Perhaps a return to creator-controlled output is the next wave.



Thompson's fate?

Asked about any predictions for the world of comics, McCarthy said, "Well... Obviously there's a whole pantheon of D.C. Thomson characters that are ripe to be updated by some new comics iconclast: y'know the type of thing — *Black Bob* becomes a pit bull terrier, *Biffo the Bear* becomes a strung-out *Trainspotting*-style anti-super-hero, *Lord Snooty* is turned into a '60s - '90s Lyndsey Anderson class-war tract, *Desperate Dan*, in a surprisingly off-beat twist, does *not* become a grim, stubble-chinned avenger, but instead achieves a kind of Silver Age shining innocence, beguiling us with his whimsical naivety."

"Verily I say unto ye, this twaddle shall come to pass. A plague shall descend upon us!"

Phew! It is nice to see that age has not mellowed him!

George Miller

McCarthy is shortly heading off to Australia to work with the brilliant movie maker, George Miller — *Mad Max* and *Babe* — on a new, untitled science fiction project which, understandably, he's very excited about.

"George Miller created one of the best films of the eighties in *Road Warrior* — and *Babe* was pretty cool, too... I'm looking forward to creating something totally new and original in the fantasy genre, with George."

Upcoming movies bearing the McCarthy stamp will be *The Borrowers* and *Lost in Space* — "I'm preserving the honorable tradition of alien pets portrayed as chimps wearing furry hats!" — which he completed in 1996.

He has also created an IMAX motion-ride.

This account pretty much sums up McCarthy's work for the last eight months. Hopefully the comics world hasn't lost one of its most idiosyncratic and entertaining creators for good.

"Any chance of a shag?", he concluded, in his inimitable way.

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Remember: this is a sale of comics gathered from existing retail outlets who overstocked on certain lines. This means that many titles are held in multiple quantities. But as we've mailed over 9,000 comics to more than 650 satisfied collectors this year, some lines are low. Phone now!

Sales figures from publishers and distributors do not reflect actual sales to the public, being based on orders placed by retailers, who can fail to spot trends, or easily overstock. But they do give an indication as to the movement in the market.

Combined top sellers: Nov '96

Top 50 US comics sales

This listing details the retail trade's top 50 comics purchases as reported by Marvel's Heroes World Distributors. It is assessed by an independent market research company, contracted by Marvel Comics, and uses Marvel and Image comics sales as a yardstick for other publishers.

Rank	Title & Price	Publisher
1	***Superman: The Wedding Album ($5.95)***	***DC***
2	**Uncanny X-Men #340 ($1.95)**	**Marvel**
3	**X-Men #60 ($1.95)**	**Marvel**
4	**Wolverine #109 ($1.95)**	**Marvel**
5	**Spawn #56 ($1.95)**	**Image**
6	**Fantastic Four #3 ($1.95)**	**Marvel**
7	**Iron Man #3 ($1.95)**	**Marvel**
8	**Spawn the Impaler #2 ($2.95)**	**Image**
9	**Curse of the Spawn #3 ($1.95)**	**Image**
10	**Generation X #23 ($1.95)**	**Marvel**
11	The Avengers #3 ($1.95)	Marvel
12	Captain America #3 ($1.95)	Marvel
13	DC/Marvel: All Access #2 ($1.95)	DC
14	X-Man #23 ($1.95)	Marvel
15	X-Force #62 ($1.95)	Marvel
16	DC/Marvel: All Access #3 ($1.95)	DC
17	Gen^{13} #15 ($2.50)	Image
18	X-Factor #130 ($1.95)	Marvel
19	Cable #39 ($1.95)	Marvel
20	*Deadpool #1* ($1.95)	Marvel
21	*Gen^{13} Bootleg #1* ($2.50)	Image
22	Magneto #3 ($1.95)	Marvel
23	*Spider-Man/Gen^{13}* ($4.95)	Marvel
24	*JLA #1* ($1.95)	DC
25	X-Men: Rise of Apocalypse #4 ($1.95)	Marvel
26	*X-Man '96* ($2.95)	Marvel
27	*Imperial Guard #1* ($1.95)	Marvel
28	Excalibur #104 ($1.95)	Marvel
29	Adventures of Superman #541 ($1.95)	DC
30	Action Comics #728 ($1.95)	DC
31	Superman: Man of Steel #63 ($1.95)	DC
32	X.S.E. #3 ($1.95)	Marvel
33	Amazing Spider-Man #419 ($1.50)	Marvel
34	Mystique & Sabretooth #2 ($1.95)	Marvel
35	Incredible Hulk #449 ($1.50)	Marvel
36	*Darkness #1* ($2.50)	Top Cow
37	*Domino #1* ($1.95)	Marvel
38	Spider-Man #76 ($1.95)	Marvel
39	Witchblade #11 ($2.50)	Top Cow
40	*Team X/Team 7* ($4.95)	Marvel
41	Spectacular Spider-Man #242 ($1.50)	Marvel
42	*Maverick* ($2.95)	Marvel
43	*Silver Surfer/Superman* ($5.95)	Marvel
44	Sensational Spider-Man #12 ($1.95)	Marvel
45	Batman #538 ($1.95)	DC
46	X-Files #24 ($2.95)	Topps
47	DV8 #3 ($2.50)	Image
48	Elektra #3 ($1.95)	Marvel
49	Superman #119 ($1.95)	DC
50	Spider-Man: HobGoblin Lives #1 ($2.50)	Marvel

Publishers sorted by sub-groups (families): November 1996

Rank	Family & No. of titles & percentage	Publisher
1	**X-Men (25) 21%**	**Marvel**
2	**Marvel Universe (32) 12%**	**Marvel**
3	**Superman (21) 11%**	**DC**
4	**Batman (15) 6%**	**DC**
=	**Spider-Man (11) 6%**	**Marvel**
6	Todd McFarlane Prods (3) 4%	Image
=	Wildstorm Productions (9) 4%	Image
=	DC Universe (13) 4%	DC
=	Justice League (9) 4%	DC
10	Vertigo (12) 3%	DC
=	Maximum Press (14) 3%	Maximum
12	Top Cow (5) 2%	Image
=	Paramount Comics (5) 2%	Marvel
14	Dark Horse Licensed (4) 1%	Dark Horse
=	Legion of Super-Heroes (4) 1%	DC
=	Highbrow Studios (3) 1%	Image
=	Dark Horse Comics (12) 1%	Dark Horse
=	Extreme Studios (7%) 1%	Image
=	Homage Comics (3) 1%	Image
=	Acclaim Superheroes (4) 1%	Acclaim

The number of books includes product that has been resolicited.

Marvel total paid circulation: 1996

The following figures represent the actual total sales of each title's latest available issue (as of filing date October 1996) as opposed to (right) the average based on the entire year.

1	**Uncanny X-Men**	**426,229**
2	**X-Men**	**389,626**
3	**Wolverine**	**337,672**
4	**Generation X**	**254,532**
5	**X-Man**	**246,629**
6	**X-Force**	**213,123**
7	**Amazing Spider-Man**	**213,120**
8	**X-Factor**	**205,663**
9	**Excalibur**	**166,510**
10	**Hulk**	**158,693**
11	Cable	152,749
12	Spider-Man	144,276
13	Fantastic Four	134,183
14	Spectacular Spider-Man	127,469
15	Avengers	127,245
16	Mighty Thor	114,086
17	Captain America	110,031
18	Ghost Rider	79,794
19	Daredevil	79,423
20	Iron Man	70,266

Marvel average paid circulation: 1996

The following represents a title's average 1996 sale. Compared to nearest to filing figure (left) shows whether sales increased or decreased across the year.

1	**Uncanny X-Men**	**455,570**
2	**X-Men**	**432,119**
3	**Wolverine**	**266,815**
4	**Generation X**	**247,828**
5	**X-Force**	**233,665**
6	**X-Man**	**227,315**
7	**Amazing Spider-Man**	**216,779**
8	**X-Factor**	**194,652**
9	**Spider-Man**	**165,342**
10	**Excalibur**	**160,838**
11	Cable	149,639
12	Spectacular Spider-Man	135,110
13	Avengers	123,581
14	Hulk	114,272
15	Mighty Thor	111,529
16	Fantastic Four	105,506
17	Silver Surfer	93,091
18	Captain America	79,676
19	Adventures of Spider-Man	68,948
20	What If?!	67,638

RETAIL INDEX

Key to abbreviations used

imp	= air imported new issues
back	= back issues stocked
s-p	= small press & fanzines
merch	= trading cards, videos, T-shirts, posters, models, etc
ind	= US independent comics (non-newsstand & manga)
Brit	= British comics & albums
u/g	= underground comics
gn	= graphic novels & trade paperback editions
STO	= standing order service, (new comics reserved)
RPG	= role playing games
CCG	= customisable card games

CENTRAL LONDON

■ **Adventureland Inc**, 309 Railton Rd, Herne Hill, London SE24 0JN. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 12-4. (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, collectable toys) 0171 346 0020

■ **Avalon Comics**, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11. Mon-Thur 10.00-5.45, Fri 10.00-6.30; Sat 9.30-6.00 (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 0171-924 3609

■ **Book & Comic Exchange**, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun: 10-8. Nothing legal refused (back, ind, Brit, u/g, gn) 0171 229 8420

■ **Comic Showcase**, 76 Neal St, London WC2. Mon - Wed 10-6; Thurs - Sat 10-7; Sun 12-5 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, cartoon books, original art) 0171-240 3664

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 71 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1DG. Mon-Wed & Sat 10-6; Thurs & Fri 10-7 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, film & tv) 0171 836 4179

■ **Gosh!** 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1 (opposite British Museum) 10-6 7 days a week inc Bank Hols. Late Thur-Fri til 7 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, largest selection of newspaper strip compilations in UK) 0171 636 1011

■ **Mega-City Comics**, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Sun 10-6; late Thurs + Fri to 7. (imp, back, merch, s-p, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film-tv fantasy, horror, body art, subculture, STO) 0171 485 9320

■ **Platinum Age Comics/Bayswater Books**, 27a Craven Terrace, Lancaster Gate, London W2 3EL. Mon-Sun 11-7 (but sometimes till midnight!) (back, ind, u/g, general 2nd hand books, search service) 0171 402 7396

OUTER LONDON

■ **Altered Images**, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High St, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Mon-Wed & Fri 10.30-5.30; Thur 10-7; Sat 9-6 (imp back ind merch Brit gn STO) 0181 770 3815

■ **Archive Collections**, 328 High Street, Orpington, Kent BR6 0NQ. Mon-Thur 10-5.30; Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 10-1 (imp, back merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 01689 824489

■ **Atomic Comics**, 1112 High Rd, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Sat 10-6 excl Fri 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, 2nd hand horror fantasy sf bks, original art) 0181-597 8547

■ **Blue Silver Comics**, 32 Northfield Ave, West Ealing, London W13 9RL. Mon-Wed 11-6.30; Thur-Fri 11-7; Sat 10-6; Sun 11-4. (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO) 0181 840 9446

■ **Book Gallery: The Illustrated Book Shop**, 11-17 Stockwell St, Greenwich, London SE10 9JN. Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat & Sun 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, ind, gn, u/g, 2nd hand & new SF-horror-fantasy bks, art bks, bargain bks, remainders, art prints) 0181 853 2151

■ **Calamity Comics**, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6, Thurs & Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy tv & film bks & merch, Sega & Nintendo game cartridges, videos) 0181-427 3831

■ **Comic Mania**, Unit 35, In-Shops (opposite police station), High Street, Wealdstone, Middlesex HA3 5DE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO) 0181 427 2090

■ **Comic Shack**, 720 High Rd, Leytonstone, London E11 3NN. Mon-Thurs 9.30- 5.30; Fri & Sat 9.30-6.30; Sun 11-5. Also by appointment (imp, back, s-p, merch, u/g, gn, hbks) 0181-539 7260/0181-555 9303 (eve)

■ **Comic World**, Unit 11 Acton Market, The Oaks Shopping Centre, High Street, Acton, London W3 6RF. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7; Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, STO) 0181 992 9100

■ **Economy Comics**, 12 Plumstead High St, Plumstead, London SE18 1SN. Mon-Sat 12-8; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, STO, cards + ltd editions) 0181 310 3375

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00; Thurs till 7. (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, Brit, STO, CCGs, film/tv mags, sf/fantasy bks, videos) 0181 681 5189

■ **Kent Comics**, 42 Well Hall Rd, Eltham, London SE9 6SF. Mon Tues Thur Sat 10-5, Fri 10-6, closed Wed & Sun (imp, back, merch, gn, STO, CCG) 0181 850 5779

■ **Krypton Komics**, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Mon-Wed 10-6; Thur-Fri 9.30-7; Sat 9-6. Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, s-p, ind, gn, STO) 0181-801 5378

■ **Mighty World of Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, Herts EN4 8RF. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thur-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, u/g tv-film & fantasy gn STO) 0181-449 5535

■ **Readers Dream**, 100A Harlington Road West, Feltham (near Heathrow airport) Middx TW14 0JJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00 excl Wed - closed (imp, back, gn, STO) 0181-844 0780

NEW **Rodney's Comics & Games**, 33 Longbridge Rd, Barking, Essex IG11 8TN. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (late Fri 7pm) (imp, back, ind, gn, cards, Sony/Sega dealership, video/cd, RPG, CCGs) 0181 594 2858

■ **Skinny Melink's**, 66 Loampit Vale, Lewisham, London SE13. Sun-Tues 11-6; Wed-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, ind s-p, u/g, gn, STO) 0181-318 0499

■ **They Walk Among Us**, 32 Union Court, Sheen Rd, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1AA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 excl Fri 9.30-6 (imp, merch, back, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, fantasy/s-f/horror bks, STO, sub-culture) Phone/fax 0181 948 8476

■ **30th Century Comics**, Unit 5, Putney Market (1st Floor), Putney Exchange Shopping Centre, Putney High Street, London SW15 1TW. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, film & tv, fantasy/horror/sf bks) 0181 788 2052

■ **Time Trek**, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1TR. Mon - Sat 9 - 5.30 (late Thurs to 8) (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, sf TV & film related merch, STO) 0181 313 0677

■ **Universal Comics**, 5 Bell Parade Bell Rd, Hounslow TW3 3NS. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO) 0181 577 8450

■ **Westside Comics** *now at:* 442 Uxbridge Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 0EL. Mon-Fri 11.00-6.00, Sat 10.00-6.00 (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO). 0181-813 5019

SOUTH EAST

■ **ACE Comics**, 1 Headgate Buildings, St John's St, Colchester, Essex C02 7AD. Mon -Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, u/g, Brit, ind gn STO RPG, rock t-shirts) 01206 561912

■ **The American Comic Shop**, 1 Church St, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (just off High St). Mon-Thurs 10-5.30, Fri 9.30-5.30, Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Trek & Star Wars merch, ind, original artwork) 01634 817410

■ **Andy's Comic Cavern**, Windsor Open Market (back of Woolworth's), Bachelors Acre, Windsor. Saturdays only 7.30-4.00 (imp, back, ind, gn, STO) Free delivery for Windsor & Slough area. 01753 621978

■ **Calamity Comics 2**, 90 Queens Road, The Broadway, Watford, Herts WD1 2LA. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; closed Wed; Thurs & Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy tv & film bks & merch, videos) 01923 249293

■ **Cartoon Shop**, 22 Southernhay, Town Centre, Basildon, Essex SS14 1EL. Mon - Wed & Sat 10-6, Thurs & Fri 10-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, RPG) 01268 534194

■ **Cartoon Shop**, 368 Chartwell West, Top Floor, Victoria Circus Shopping Centre, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, RPG) 01702 613021

■ **Central City Comics**, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn, STO) 01473 233017

■ **Comic Showcase**, 19-20 St Clements St, Oxford. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, gn, STO) 01865-723680

■ **David's Comics**, 3 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Fri 9.30-6; Sat 9-6. (imp, back, ind, u/g, Brit, STO, gn, exchange, club discount) 01273 690223

■ **Escape**, Cheapside, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7AG (near Odeon Cinema). Tues-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO, film & tv) 01734 575131

■ **Fantastic Store Ink**, 14 Gardner Street, Brighton BN1 1UP. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-6. (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, Brit, u/g, STO, original art) 01273 670012

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 60 Burleigh St., Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00 (imp, back, ind, gn, Brit, u/g, STO, CCG, videos, sf/fantasy bks, tv/film mags, merch) 01223 301 666

■ **Incognito Comic Shop**, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, Brit, STO, film/tv merch) phone/fax: 01227 785898

■ **Incognito Comic Shop**, 21 Union St, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, Brit, STO, film/tv merch) phone/fax: 01622-683642

■ **MTCC Trading Cards**, c/o In Retrospect, 107-109 Orpington High St, Orpington, Kent BR6 0LG. Mon-Sat 10-5. (trading cards, Trek-Disney-fantasy-etc) 01689 835700

■ **Off World: The Sci-Fi Store**, Unit 20, Romford Shopping Halls, Market Place, Romford, Essex RM1 3AT. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (merch s-p imp STO CCG; specialists in Trek, Star Wars & s-f collectables) 01708 765633

■ **Reservoir Frogs Comic Shop** is now at: 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 1AL. Mon-Sat 8.30-6.00; 12-4 Sun (imp, back, gn, STO, u/g, ind) phone/fax: 01273 687802

■ **Tall Toad Comics**, Amersham Market - every Tues; Hemel Hempstead market - every Thursday, High Wycombe market - every Friday & Saturday. (imp, back, merch, gn, STO). 01442 250653

■ **Universal Comics**, *now at:* 49D Herschel Street, Slough. Mon-Sat 9.30-6.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO) 01753 571 799

■ **Universal Comics**, 16 London Road, Staines. Mon-Fri 10.30-6.30, Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO) 01784 460300

■ **Whatever Comics**, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits) 01227 453226

■ **Whatever Comics**, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10.00-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits) 01622 681041

■ **Wonderworld**, 133 St Mary Street, Southampton SO1 1NX. Tues-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, FRPG & miniatures) 01703 634658

MIDLANDS

■ **A Collectors Dream**, 16 Park St., Kingswinford DY6 9LX, West Midlands. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp back s-p merch ind Brit u/g gn STO film/tv fantasy glamour horror ppbks toys videos. Buy-sell-exchange) 01384 287234

■ **Abstract Sprocket**, St Benedicts Indoor Market, 21 St Benedicts St, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 01603 667700

■ **Another World**, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0116 2515266

■ **Another World**, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0115 9484122

■ **Arrival Comics & Books**, 2 Broad Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit) 01902-313 660

■ **Comics Unlimited**, 4 Clair Court, Lime Street, Bedford MK40 1NH. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, Brit, u/g, STO, RPG) 01234 218984

■ **Comics Unlimited**, 26 Town Centre, Hatfield, Herts AL10 0LD. Wed-Mon 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG) 01707 256788

■ **Comics Unlimited**, Unit 11, The Arcade, Letchworth, Hertfordshire. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, Brit, u/g, STO, RPG) 01462 480018

■ **Fantasy World**, 10 Market Square Arcade, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1NU. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01782 279294/fax 01782 202381

■ **The Final Frontier**, 29 St Nicholas Place, Leicester LE1 4LD. Mon-Sat 9-5. (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO) Estab 1984 0116 251 4347

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00; Thurs till 7.00 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, film/ tv material, sf/horror bks; CCG, RPG) 01203 229672

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film/tv, videos, STO) 0115 958 4706

■ **Ground Zero**, 11 Handley Arcade, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1NQ. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.00 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, STO, accessories) 01623 22017

■ **Julian's Books & Comics**, Unit 2 Vine Court, 7 Vine St, Evesham, Worcs WR11 4RW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (discout back issues, gn, sf/horror bks, gen fiction, RPG) 01386 423848

■ **Nostalgia & Comics**, 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon - Thurs 9.15 - 5.45, Fri + Sat 9.15 - 6.00 (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, s-p, u/g, Brit, STO) 0121 643 0143

■ **Nowhere Comics**, 3 Kings Court, Bridge St (next to Bridge St Records) Walsall. Mon-Sat 9.00-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, frgn, accessories) 01922 643352

■ **Nowhere Comics Elsewhere**, Crown Centre (next to library), Stourbridge town centre. Mon-Sat 9.00-5.30, (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, frgn, accessories) 01384 370536

■ **Page 45**, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, indie comix & indie merch specialists, manga) 0115 9508045

■ **Phoenix Comix**, 43 Kettering Road, Northampton. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.00 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn STO) 01604 602311

■ **Time Zone**, 12 Fish Street (off Butcher Row), Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, CCG) 01743 365192

NORTH WEST

■ **Comic Zone**, 4 Church Rd, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG, Brit) 01606 49255

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 92 Bold St, Liverpool L1 4HR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Thur to 7.00 (imp, back merch, ind, Brit, u/g, STO, film/tv material, sf & horror bks, RPG, CCG) 0151 707 1491

■ **Good News**, 135 Albert Road, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 6LB. Mon-Sat 5am-7.30pm; Sun 7.30-7.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, Brit)

■ **Imagination Station**, 16 Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1QS. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO)

■ **Planet Eater**, 5-7 Union Street Southport, Lancs PR9 0QF Mon - Sat: 9 - 6 Sun: 12-4 (imp, back, merch, model kits, Trek, action figures, STO) 01704 548629

■ **Space Odyssey Megastore**, 65 Oldham St, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, sf-fantasy bks, cards, posters, badges, stills, LF film bks, Trek, Dr Who, etc) 0161 839 4777

■ **Thunderbooks**, 332 Lytham Rd, Blackpool FY4 1DW. 10-5.30 Mon-Tues Thurs-Sat (& Sundays June-Oct inc.); Wed 1.00-3.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, media collectors' items) 01253-348321 fax: 407813

■ **Thunderbooks II**, 116 Friargate, Preston, PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, s-p, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG) 01772-204287

■ **Time Zone**, 3 Academy Place, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 2NR. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, CCG) 01925 651185

■ **William St News**, 12 William St., Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 1LD. Mon-Sat 6am-6pm. (imp, merch, ind, gn, RPG, STO, Brit) 01229 823112

■ **Worlds Apart**, 58-60 Lime St (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6 excl Fri 10-7 (imp, back, ind, merch, s-p, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy film mags) 0151 707 0839

NORTH EAST

■ **Beyond Reality Comics**, 183 Frodingham Rd., Scunthorpe, S Humberside DN15 7NH. Mon+Wed-Sat 11-5; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG, sci-fi, CCG) 01724 276267

■ **Books N' Comics**, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesborough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, fantasy gn, film mags, Dr Who, Trek) 01642 249143

■ **City Comics**, 120 High St West, Sunderland City Centre, SR1 1TR. Mon-Sat 10-6 excl Wed 10-2 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, gn, STO, comics bought: cash/credit) 0191 564 0613

■ **Comicville**, Ground Floor, 54 The Arcade, The Piece Hall, Halifax HX1 1RE, Yorkshire. Tues-Fri 9.30-5; Sat 10-5 Sun 11-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits, toys, Who, Trek, videos) 01422 351119

■ **Comicville**, 24 Imperial Arcade, Huddersfield HD1 2BR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO, RPG, models, Star Wars, videos) 01484 455044

■ **Dells Comic Shop**, 5 Duke St, Bradford 1, Yorks. Mon-Sat 9-5 excl Wed 9-3 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, horror masks, tv fantasy mags) 01274 770 541

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 59 Grainger St., Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, film/tv mags, fantasy/sf bks, videos) 0191 261 9173

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield, Yorks. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9.15-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, original art, model kits, sf & fantasy gns, horror mags, newspaper strip bks) 0114 276 9475

■ **Galaxy 4**, 493 Glossop Road, Broomhill, Sheffield S10 2QE. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, sp, merch, ind, gn, STO, Dr Who & Star Wars specialists, tv ppbks) 0114 268 4976

■ **The Last Picture Show**, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8, Fri 10-9, Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, film/tv/rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604/ fax 0114 255 3399

■ **Off-World Comics**, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Thu 10-5.30; Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, customisable card games) 0191 251 2288

■ **Sheffield Space Centre**, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield, Yorks. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.00 excl Wed. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, STO, Star Trek items) 0114 275 8905

■ **Space Odyssey**, 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, media-tv-film mags, T-shirts, posters, toys, kits, cards, badges, stills, Trek, Dr Who, etc) 0113 242 6325

■ **Travelling Man**, 23 Headingley Lane, Hyde Park Corner, Headingley, Leeds LS6 1BL. Mon-Sat 10.30-5.45 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG, customisable card games) 0113 278 0417

■ **Travelling Man**, Unit 8/9 The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30, Fri-Sat 9-5.30, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG, customisable card games) 0113 242 7227

NEW **Travelling Man**, 54 Goodramgate York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10.00-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG, customisable card games) 01904 628787

WEST COUNTRY

■ **American Dream Comics**, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham, Wilts SN13 9BQ. Mon-Thurs 10-5, Fri & Sat 9-6. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01249 701647

■ **Floppy Tongue Comics**, 96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7QY. Mon-Fri 11.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO) 01722 331107

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 30 Penn St., Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs till 7.00), Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film & tv, videos, STO, sub-culture & body art) 0117 929 8692

■ **Forever People**, 35 Park Street, Bristol BS1 5NH. Mon-Sat 10.00-6.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, sf/fantasy new & 2nd hand bks, RPG, videos, tv sf memorabilia, sub-culture, body art) 0117 926 5454

■ **Kathies Comics**, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon - Fri 9.30 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 01752 257800

■ **Paradox Comics**, 103 Old Town Market, Dear Hay Lane, Poole, Dorset BH15 1NZ. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, gn, STO, videos) 01202 661346

■ **Purple Haze Comics, Records & Books**, 38 Eastlake Walk, Drakes Circus Shopping Centre, Plymouth, Devon PL1 1BX. Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, mags, merch, film/tv material, sf/horror bks, gen bks, videos, Trek/Wars merch, tapes/cds) 01752 254136

■ **Wonderworld**, 1 Lansdowne Cres, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 1RU. Tues-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, FRPG & miniatures, Games Workshop sp) 01202 293054

■ **Wonderworld**, 143 Gloucester Rd, Bristol. Mon-Sat 9-7 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, RPG, u/g, Brit, original art) 0117 924 4655

ISLE OF WIGHT

■ **Astounding Comics**, 61 Pyle Street, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1UL. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG) 01983 525320

WALES

■ **Cardiff Fantasy Centre**, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sats only 9.30-5 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, gn, STO, videos; establ 13 yrs) 01222 563005

■ **Comix Shoppe**, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, manga videos, Games Workshop stockists, customisable card games) 01792 642097

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn, STO) 01222 228885

■ **Journey into Mystery**, The Emporium, 34 Castle Arcade, Cardiff. Tues - Fri 11.00 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, gn, STO, indie records & CDs)

■ **Negative Zone**, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon - Sat 9.00am - 5.00pm. (imp, back, s-p, ind, gn, Brit, STO) 01633 222159

SCOTLAND

■ **A1 Books & Comics**, 31-35 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5RJ. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 9.30-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO) 0141 552 6692

■ **The Adventure Zone**, 280 High St, Glasgow G4 0QR. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, Trek/Wars merch, tr cards & game cards, model kits, STO Dell-Gold Key specialists) 0141-552 3323

■ **City Centre Comics**, 168 Buchanan St, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs + Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (back issues only) 0141 331 1215 (eves: 632 2786)

■ **Earth 2 Comics**, Argyle Shopping Centre, 28 Argyle St, Glasgow G2 8AD. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.00; Sat 9.30-5.30. (imp, back, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, ind, merch, STO) 0141-226 5414

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 2 - 3 Teviot Place, Edinburgh, EH1 2QZ. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30, excl Thurs till 6.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, gn, STO) 0131-225 8613

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10.00-5.30, Sun 12.00-5.00. (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, Brit, gn, STO) 0141 331 1215

■ **Future Shock**, 89 Byres Road, Glasgow G11 5HN. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, imported SF ppbk specialist, old SF bks)

NEW **High Impact Comix**, 2-3 Teviot Place, Edinburgh EH1 2QZ. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (back issues only) 0131 225 8613

■ **Justice Comics**, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5. (imp, back, ind, gn, STO, merch) 01786 447687

■ **Plan 9 Comics**, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB1 1NE. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30 (Thurs till 7.30), Sun 1 - 4.30. (imp, back, Trek/Wars merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, RPG & war game specialist, MTG, STO, model kits, magick/tarot) phone/fax: 01224 624467

■ **Reel Heroes**, 100 Barclay Street, Cowdenbeath, Fife KY4 9LD. Sundays only at Kinross Market; 7-day mail order at above address (imp, back, STO, merch specialist, tv/film videos) 01383 515542

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Dark Horizons**, 30a Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4LD (near City Hall) Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, subculture, film mags) 01232 233808

■ **Fantasy Zone**, 7 Linenhall Street, Ballymena BT43 5AJ. Mon-Sat 10.00-5.30 (imp, back, ind, t-shirts, videos, bks, stationery) 01266 46840

■ **Talisman Comics**, 47 Winetavern Street, Belfast BT1 1JQ Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 01232 438744

IRISH REPUBLIC

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 36 Dawson Street, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10.00-6.00 excl Thurs 10.00-7.00 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, Brit, gn, STO) 0035 3167 10888

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 39/40 Roches Street, Limerick. Mon-Sat 9.45-6.15 excl Fri 9.45-7.00 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, Brit, gn, STO)

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MAJOR DIGRESSIONS

On the edge of the abyss?

Peter David, writer of comics, paperbacks, film scripts and stuff, contributes a weekly column "But I Digress" to US trade paper ***The Comic Buyer's Guide****. In addition to appearing monthly in* ***Comics International****, he also writes* ***Aquaman*** *and* ***Supergirl*** *for DC,* ***Incredible Hulk*** *for Marvel and* ***Soulsearchers & Co*** *for Claypool*

IT'S TOUGH to keep up with the current situation regarding Marvel Comics. Whatever I write at the moment becomes overshadowed with new outrages.

There's horror for everyone. For shareholders, who see Marvel only as an investment, there's the fiscal bottom line. Who would have thought that the term "Negative Zone" would apply to the price of Marvel's stock?

For fans of 30 years or more who remember things like "Bullpen Bulletins" fondly, guess what! The Bullpen is pretty much gone, gutted in the most recent round of firings.

I am, at present, surrounded by news articles describing Marvel's current state of affairs. I love seeing various writers stating that "the other shoe has dropped". These people have clearly not been paying attention. An explosion at the home of Imelda Marcos wouldn't have yielded the number of flying shoes that are currently raining down on the Marvel empire.

This guy is a millionaire?

One looks at the financial situation ever since the company was taken over by Ron Perelman, and one finds oneself saying, "*This* guy is a millionaire?"

If we judge only by the performance of Marvel under his care and feeding, it makes you wonder how he could possibly mount a successful paper route, much less a financial empire.

The problem is, in trying to (in deference to the Borg) assimilate all this info, I have to admit that I'm a bit over my head. Writers try to be jacks-of-all-trades, but I'm not a financial analyst. I'm not entirely sure exactly what it is that Perelman is trying to do to salvage this mess.

It's been explained to me, and I understand it at the time that it's explained, but beyond that I get a bit confused, and I'm certainly not qualified to try and tell you. Sales, I know. Distribution I'm fine. Mergers and acquisitions, leveraged buyouts — I'm in trouble. I could barely decipher the climax of *Trading Places*, when Eddie Murphy and Dan Aykroyd were cornering the market on orange juice.

I am reminded of the *Barron's* article which ran back in 1992; it recommended for all sorts of reasons that stock-holders steer clear of Marvel Comics. The problem was that none of the reasons were remotely accurate. They were based on misinformation (wrong cover prices, statements that mis-solicited books were not returnable) and incorrect speculation (that the animation and toy line impetus would dissipate; instead, they've grown and have become the tail wagging the dog).

However, as it has turned out, the article was right, if for all the wrong reasons. After all, it was only after the article ran that Marvel made the series of mistakes which led to the current fiasco. Because the new Marvel hierarchy came into the comics business with an utter lack of knowledge as to the dynamics of our little industry. Worse, they couldn't have cared less.

Executives boasted in interviews that, because they had no sense of history, they could make decisions that were not tied to the past.

Ignorance is bliss

Of course, in the past, Marvel had been a success, but that apparently didn't occur to them. Instead, they ballyhooed their unfamiliarity, embraced it, and caressed it like a lover. Ignorance was more than bliss.

Paraphrasing Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas) in *Wall Street*: As far as the Marvel brain trust was concerned, ignorance is good. And while we're at it, bad is good, up is down, wrong is right, and everything old is in Mylar Snugs.

You see, if they *had* paid attention to history they'd have noticed that the comics industry had been in *extremely* bad shape about 15 years before. The relatively low profit margin and high maintenance of comics had made them extremely undesirable to the IDs (Independent Distributors), who were giving them little to no attention in the average magazine and mom-and-pop stores.

It was the advent of Phil Seuling and the direct market that pretty much saved the comics industry. Suddenly, comic books became high-profit items for the publishers because they could print exactly what was needed to sell it all.

A delicate balance

The IDs reacted with tremendous anger to this new, upstart form of distribution, but such people as Marvel's circulation head, Ed Shukin, warded them off, like Van Helsing waving back Dracula with a Crucifix.

The direct market and the comics industry were in a delicate balance, one thing leaning upon another.

But Marvel was not beloved within the industry. It was the largest, which gave it incredible control and power. And it doesn't matter whether or not you are benevolent; if you have power and control, you are always going to be regarded with suspicion, because power tends to corrupt.

In the direct market, distributors always had chips on their shoulders, daring Marvel to fulfil their greatest fear and cut out the middle man by selling directly to retailers.

Retailers always had chips on their shoulders, daring Marvel to fulfil their greatest fear and cut out the middle man by selling directly to the readers.

Readers always had chips on their shoulders, daring Marvel to produce something that they actually *wanted* to buy rather than something they felt they *had* to buy.

Even Marvel's positive deeds came back to bite it. Its royalty plans put hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of dollars into the pockets of key creative personnel — who then turned around and formed their own company.

The creation of Image was one of the two major death knells for Marvel, in that Image accomplished two things:

First, it showed that it was possible to compete head-to-head with Marvel. In doing so, a lot of the underlying fear that the industry had felt for the company began to erode. And when fear evaporates, that leaves anger and hostility with no dampers to hold it back.

Second, Image tied up retailer dollars by taking orders for material that didn't ship, thereby depriving both retailers and Marvel of income.

"Do Do Ron Ron"

If Marvel had only waited matters out, it could have looked golden. But Ron Perelman — like the old song "Do Do Ron Ron" — felt that he had to Do Do something.

With the unbridled industry hostility sweeping over Marvel like acid rain, and marketshare eroding, Perelman, the slash-and-burn control freak, decided that Marvel had to take control of its destiny.

Which it did. Which means, ultimately, that it has no one to blame but itself, as the second death knell chimed.

Basic physics: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. In the world of comic books, it just takes a while. For example, the creation of **The Fantastic Four** was spectacular. But when something extremely good happens, something extremely bad has to occur in order to balance it. (This would explain **Team America**.)

In this instance, if we take the creation of the direct market as an exceptionally good idea, then it was only a matter of time before an exceptionally bad idea cropped up to balance it. That was the decision to self-distribute through Heroes World.

...turned termites loose on the crutches

It was massively stupid and wrong-headed in its conception. *Everybody* knew it. Everybody — with the sole exception of those who were actually *making* the decision. Proudly devoid of loyalty, history, and common sense, Marvel went to the already-crippled retailer base and turned termites loose on the crutches. Lower discounts, higher shipping costs, and a previously regional distributor which was being asked to gear up, overnight, to become an national outlet.

In the old days, when distributors would voice suspicion to Carol Kalish or me that Marvel would self-distribute, we would dismiss the idea as ludicrous. We would

say that Marvel wasn't set up for that. That Marvel would need regional warehouses. That Marvel would need a huge staff to deal with thousands of retailers. None of these things did Marvel have, and what Marvel *didn't* need was the *tsuris* that such a situation would create.

All he needed to know

But Ron Perelman didn't care. Mr History Lesson knew all he needed to know, and heaven save us from those who know all they need to know. The comic book industry has always been cyclical, with highs and lows in its sales. With a spectacular high point having arrived, a spectacular low point was inevitable. And, when it arrived, it sent the Marvel brain trust into panic mode, stupid decisions were made, and now Marvel is haemorrhaging money, sales, and trust.

In a desperate attempt to rewrite history, Marvel turned around and gave key Image personnel *carte blanché* over major characters. Too little, too late, particularly if Marvel was hoping to re-acquire the glory days of a million or more copies sold. A Couple of hundred thousand, yes, but that doesn't make up for disastrous slippage and panicky stock-holders.

Morale has never been lower at Marvel. Why? Because Ron Perelman has made it clear that he trusts no one. He or his representatives did not trust distributors and so took it upon himself to do it himself.

He or his representatives did not trust the current editorial line-up and creators and so took away some of Marvel's greatest characters and "outsourced" them — a move that many have perceived as having ramifications far beyond a mere desperation measure to jack up sales.

As the old joke goes, he's a self-made man, which shows you the dangers of unskilled labour. If Perelman cut the line back to about 10 titles and outsourced everything, he could absorb accounting and legal needs into already-existing arms of his businesses and shut down the entire office. Can he be trusted not to do that? No. Can he be expected not to do that? No. At this rate, unless something turns around very quickly, nothing will be left of Marvel but scorched earth. Which would be disastrous across the board. After all, Marvel the publishing entity may only account for 15% of Marvel's income, but it's 30% of the market.

If Marvel Comics ceases to exist, the already beleaguered retailer base takes a major hit. More and more comics shops close. If enough comics shops close, Diamond goes belly up. If Diamond goes, DC will have to move with lightning speed to distribute through Warners — and it might not be able to move quickly enough.

As for the independents, well there's talk of the indies forming their own group distribution arm. I think it's a good idea. And they'd better talk fast.

What If... Time Warner purchased Marvel?

What would be an interesting development would be if Time Warner purchased Marvel. This isn't to say that I have inside information; I don't. I'm just speculating that it would be a good match.

From the show biz end, Marvel has any number of characters who would be good fodder for movies and television series, and Time Warner has the resources to produce something that Marvel's never had: a movie that doesn't stink on ice.

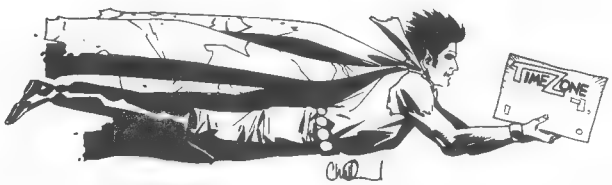
From the Publishing side, the Marvel and DC universes could continue to cross over to mutual benefit. Hell, most of the top editors at DC used to be at Marvel, anyway.

Besides, if Marvel drove the stake into the heart of the direct market — let's be honest — DC, in going exclusive with Diamond, cut off the head. DC bears some responsibility in this mess, and, if Time Warner saved Marvel, it would help mitigate some of its own actions.

The industry teeters on the edge of the abyss, folks, and someone is going to have to take swift action to drag it back. And I have a sneaking suspicion it's not going to be Do Do Ron Ron Perelman, because Do Do Ron Ron took a publishing giant and turned it into — well — Do Do.

© Peter David, 1997

(Peter David, writer of stuff, can be contacted at To Be Continued Inc., PO Box 239, Bayport, NY 11705, United States of America.)



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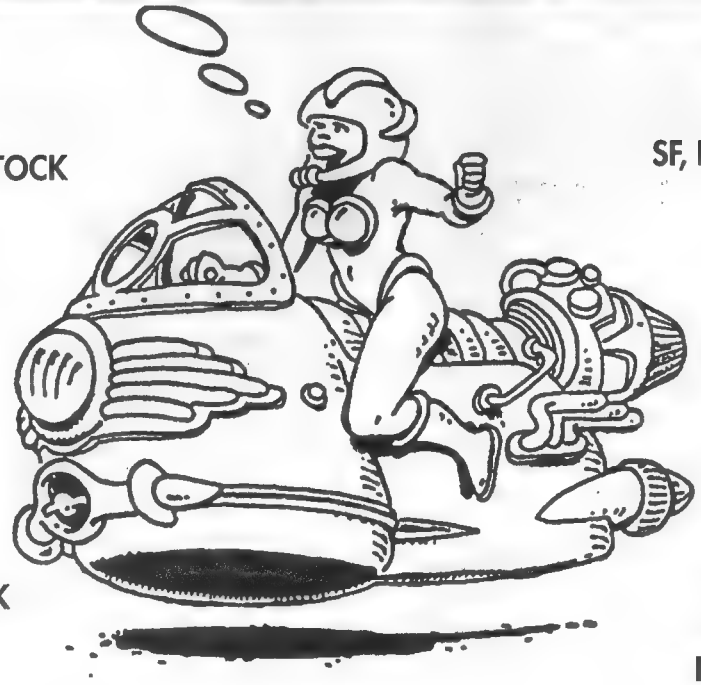

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nETWORKS

SEEN ON THE NET

Kesel off Daredevil?

MARK Allen Fox (mafox@acs.ucalgary.ca) posted about an imminent departure: *I just finished talking to Cary Nord, penciller of Daredevil, and he said that (the writer) Karl Kesel has resigned from writing Daredevil. For his part, Cary said that he was staying with the book for now, but that the editor, James Felder, had been removed from it by the "higher powers". The new writer will be Joe Kelly, one of Marvel's homegrown writers who probably does exactly what his bosses want.*

The Wizard's Tale

THERE are many reasons for late books. But if a book is finished well before publication, there is usually no problem. So the absence of the finished-for-years **Wizard's Tale** from Homage caused some queries.

Author Kurt Busiek (kbusiek@aol.com) was on hand to explain: *It was caught in the Eclipse bankruptcy, and we didn't get the art back until earlier this year. All that needed to be done was some minor re-dialoguing, the lettering, the book design and the colour separation. There has been a great deal of difficulty over the colour seps, largely because the art is fully painted, and Wildstorm hasn't had to deal with quite so much painted art at once in the past.*

Everyone involved thought there'd be no problem getting the book separated in time for its original release date, but everyone was, apparently, wrong.

Ellis is smokin'

AN update on Warren Ellis's homepage, Smoke Damage, leads to new vitriol from the controversial writer in his dig at writers bemoaning the decline of the comics industry.

Ellis writes: *Infantilism in comics is over. Old men and women practising self-gratification by bringing their own childhood loves into modern comics; this ends. If you've got nothing more in you than chewing over old flavours and gobbing out ideas that'd lost all their spearmint by the 1970s, then get the hell offstage...*

*I want to see good children's comics. Not "wholesome" comics. **Ren & Stimpy** was popular because it was not wholesome — it was simply damned funny... If you're going to do horror books, do horror books. That means no f**king elves. Quit pretending.*

Continuity does not equal story. If your story is built solely out of a conglomerate of old stories, then sorry, but you don't have a story. Yes, you. You know that it's you I'm talking to. Don't ask me why your sales are slipping monthly. I've told you why. And you will not listen. And now you will die.

Ellis also announced he was writing an issue of **Gen 13 Bootleg**, for **Preacher** artist Steve Dillon.

A lack of thunder

DAN Vado of Amaze Ink/Slave Labor Comics expressed despair at the sales of his book **Scarlet Thunder**, and that he couldn't keep the artist, because he couldn't pay him anything.

Someone asked if Jim Valentino could pick **Scarlet Thunder** up for Image, Vado replied: *I've already lost **Replacement God** to Image and it was my imprint's best selling title. If I were to take something of my own there it would just confirm the notion that people already seem to have that our company can't sell a comic. No one would ever bring a title to us again.*

In all honesty, if I were going to do anything with the title it would be to take it to DC and do it as the series I had originally intended. But that will never happen either.

Vado had been touted as one of DC's shining stars after a modicum of success with **The Griffin**. Sadly for the Slave Labor head, his ill-fated run on **Justice League America** seemed to prove it had been a false start!

Under Siege

OVER on the Wildstorm Studios Web page (www.wildstorm.com) an announcement was made that is sure to have retailers gnashing their teeth: *WildStorm Productions has announced that the first issue of the new comic book series **Siege** will be posted on WildStorm's Web Site in January. Starting on January 2nd, a new page will be added every weekday, finishing on January 31. The first issue of the comic will be on sale January 29. Pages will only remain online for 3 days each, so fans are encouraged to check the web site often to get the whole story. Subsequent issues will ship monthly.*

Of course, the connection fees to download 28 pages may cost more than the comic in the first place. Just point your browsers to www.im.gte.com/siege and pray you can pay your phonebill.

Marvel's money page

FOR all the information on the Marvel bankruptcy/Chapter 11 story, Francis Uy (fuy1@umbc.edu) has gathered together all press releases and comments on one web page. Since the Internet had the news within 15 minutes of Marvel's original announcement, it's a quick way to keep up-to-date.

Just try www.gl.umbc.edu/~fuy1/comics/marvel.html

Friends again?

Elayne Wechsler-Chaput (firehead@panix.com) was pleased to bring one part of the ongoing Rob Liefeld story to an end, stating: *Jim Valentino announced that his particular lawsuit versus Rob Liefeld has been settled out of court. He gave no further details.*

As part of what seems to be a general air of concilliation, Peter David (72550.2517@CompuServe.COM) posted: *Y'know, it's funny. I spoke to Rob just the other day and he told me he really hopes we get to work together someday and how much he enjoys my column.*

Hmmm, nothing like a bit of bridge rebuilding.

Talbot's online stuff

BRITISH artists and self-publishers are increasingly finding the web a very easy way to reach their potential American readers without spending thousand of pounds on advertising.

Bryan Talbot has a new web site at www.waverider.co.uk/~milieu/Bryan.html. This includes a list of what Talbot is currently working on; forthcoming signing appearances, a Talbot gallery, a selection of interviews and online comics to be downloaded for viewing at the leisure of the browser.

ESPerisms

WRITER and self-publisher James Hudnall was pleased to announce: *Espers has just been optioned by Columbia-Tristar for TV. Director Tim Hunter has been signed to direct the pilot. I've been wanting to see Espers make the jump to other media for some time now.*

The comic has been published by Eclipse, Epic/Marvel (as **Interface**) and self published by Halloween. But it has now made the leap, along with other Halloween books, to Image Comics.

Compiled by
Richard J Johnston & Phil Hall

GETTING CONNECTED

On Setting up a web page

Question: *I've had a great time wandering around the Internet. Truly a hubbub of activity, with phenomenal amounts of comic book related news and information at my fingertips... But now I want my own web page! I want to publish and be damned. So, how do you go about it?*

Despite reservations about CompuServe expressed recently on this page, it can be quite useful for helping you design and publish your own web pages. Most web page wizards (programs for creating and updating your own web site) are easy to follow and they are virtually idiot proof.

You can get a free downloadable copy of Netscape 3.0 (check out www.netscape.com or e-mail them at help@Netscape.com) or contact Compuserve for a copy of its Homepage Wizard. It also helps to have access to a scanner or an abundance of picture files. Then you too can have a bash at being a web celebrity.

Most pages are programmed in the computer language *html*. But you can use a word processor, utilising the Netscape or the Internet Explorer programs to design pages.

It is easy. Have a fiddle. Press buttons, get advice from the designers of pages you like or admire (most of them are approachable and many will eventually drop into your page to see how well you've done), and basically steal all the bits that make their pages look so good. Plagiarism isn't frowned on in the world of cyberspace, it's often actively encouraged!

Contact your system administrator (sysop) and ask about publishing rates, often very cheap, and you'll soon be able to send and update your pages, ready for everyone to read. Send enough posts to Usenet, the Internet related forums and enough e-mails to search engines and soon people the world over will be rushing (hopefully) to your site to check out your opinions on everything from **Captain America #2**, to achieving world peace.

But be sure that you've actually got something to say that other people would be interested in first... although everyone knows much of the Internet is filled with rubbish! There is no restriction on content (although splattering your homepages with pornography might be a good way of attracting all the wrong sorts of people).

But remember, links and search engine bookmarks (pointing to your page) will continue to live on, long after you've faded away. If you decide to be outrageous, stupid or insulting, it will remain there for the entire world to see across years to come. Be careful or it could come back to haunt you! ...*Phil Hall & Rich Johnston*

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Mail Order CoBRA Protection

Hi Folks,

Here's a couple of pages listing some of the things that we've had in since we last talked, plus a liquidation corner to clear room for new supplies.

We are currently working on a comprehensive Marvel / Malibu / Epic catalogue which should see publication sometime late next month or early March.

Whilst you are looking forward to that, don't forget that our existing back issue catalogue (available for the asking) is valid until February 28th 1997. Although many of the toys, low stocks and popular items have gone, there is still a wealth of opportunity to find bargains (so call and request a copy today).

Here, in our first outing of 1997, we've pulled together some more Heavy Metals, the collectible card game sensation of the year (X-Files) and we're liquidating some Comic Defense System Products.

As usual, the minimum order is just £5.00 for written orders and £10.00 for phoned / faxed orders. We charge a flat rate shipping fee of £3.50 for delivery to mainland UK, whatever the size of your order (see the ordering information panel for full details, including overseas deliveries).

To improve the efficiency of order processing, pick, pack and dispatch, please use the computer codes given for each title when you order e.g. H708 Heavy Metal November 1996, thankyou.

The prices in this advertisement are valid from publication until February 28th 1997. Should you desire to do so, products from all recent, still valid, advertisements, may be mixed, matched and consolidated into a single order for dispatch to you. .

All prices are per copy, per individual unit or set depending on the definitions used. All "mature" titles, or titles that we consider fall into that category, such as Heavy Metal, Preacher and all of Glen Danzig's output, have a mandatory age requirement of eighteen. Therefore should you wish to order any Mature titles then we must have your honest, signed statement that you are in excess of eighteen years before we can ship any mature product to you.

OK, its time to get on with the goodies, look forward to the interesting year of 1997, and watch Marvel wriggle out of Chapter Eleven.

Enjoy the reading fun of four colour adventures folks - they're great.

Hope to hear from you soon.

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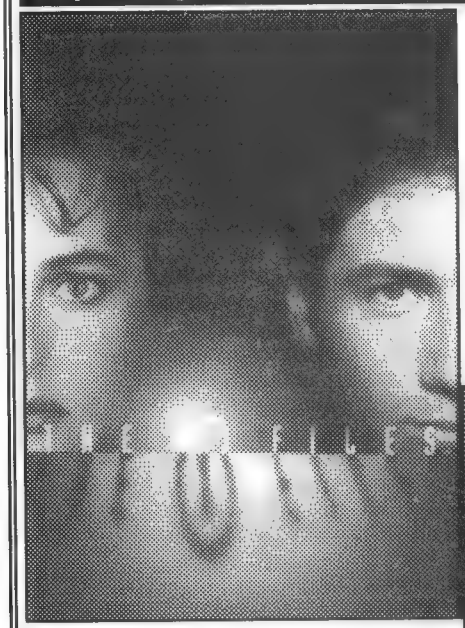

The X-Files comes to life in a brand new Collectible Card Game. Players can capture the same suspense and intrigue of the X-Files as they construct unique conspiracies surrounding Agents, Sites, Events, Witnesses and many other categories in an attempt to solve their opponent's conspiracy. The mysteries lay beneath every corner and behind every card. The closer each player comes to the truth, the more powerful the conspiracy becomes. Only two rules apply ...Deny Everything... Trust No One. The game is introduced in a set of 354 cards with images taken directly from seasons one, two and three of THE X FILES television show. Cards are available in 60-card Starter Decks (MSRP $9.50). 15-card Booster Packs (MSRP $2.99) are also available allowing players to enhance their decks and increase the challenge.
The game may be played with TWO or more players and can be customized to fit the needs of the basic to advance player.
EACH STARTER DECK of 60 cards comes with two rule books, The Standard Official Rules & Procedures Manual and The Advanced Rules & Procedures Manual.

X2000 X-FILES COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME:
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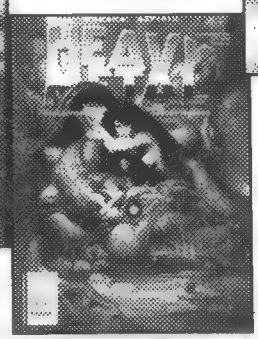
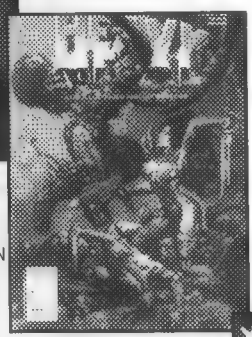
.....£5.87 plus £1.03 VAT = £6.90
X2000B Single Fifteen Card Booster Pack of The X-Files Collectible Card Game
.....£1.69 + 30p VAT = £1.99
Boosters come in Boxes of 36 pack: If a full box is required then please order 36 packs.

Heavy Metal, the Adult Fantasy Magazine is published bi-monthly (6 per year) with quarterly specials. It's produced by Kevin Eastman as part of his Metal Mammoth Productions and showcases the best of avant gard and futuristic European and other art from around the world. As much of the content is adult oriented, Heavy Metal falls firmly into our 18+ category and therefore an age statement is mandatory should you wish to order copies of this magnificent magazine.



H707 HEAVY METAL
September 1996 featuring a small gallery of art by Manara. Another episode of Museum by Fernando de Filipe. The longest piece is a convoluted entertaining tale about a team of fired Hollywood executives who creep back to the lot to re-create their successes. The movies become confused with reality, characters and "real" people jump between scenes and plots. Action adventure, time travel square jawed heroes and beautiful dames are all lovingly portrayed in this massive multi-page extravaganza called RAUL FULGUREX IN THE MUTINEERS ARE REVOLTING by Tronchet & Gelli.
ON THE ROAD AGAIN - CALYPSO ROCK by Baru is a surreal story of the clash between Rock, Calypso & Disco. NO MANS LAND by Lorenzo Diaz and Carlos Puerta switches between a pilot's horror filled experiences during World War 1 and his equal horror in 20's America when joining the Klu Klux Klan.
TOWARDS A NEW BEGINNING by Azpiri is a sweet tale of Robots looking for reasons to exist. Other shorts include RASPUTIN by Manara. 120 pages US $4.50 UK £3.50.
WAREHOUSE PRICE. £1.95



H708 HEAVY METAL
November 1996
another 120 page extravaganza of Fantasy. In NOISE FROM THE CEILING AGAIN by Caza, decide for yourself whether its racist or not.
MAELSTROM by D. Fabbri, 2071 crime noir set in BladeRunner Territory plus the usual short vignettes like the one about the doctor who has to be a vetenarian, the cops who have to put down a riot; and a futuristic golden shower.
Other stories include THE PLEASURE OF LOVE by Frezatto, a sex fable with a double take twist ending and the latest adventure of those galactic con men BURTON & CYB who've landed up on a planet of telepaths. You can't scam someone who can read your mind, so how do they get out of this one.
US $4.50 UK £3.50
WAREHOUSE PRICE.£1.95

H709: HEAVY METAL
January 1977
Fans of THE TRIGAN EMPIRE and anyone who loves exquisitely rendered anatomically realistic art in futuristic settings are going to salivate over the main story in this issue. Its STORM; THE LIVING PLANET by Don Lawrence and Martin Lodewijk.
When "Look and Learn" the weekly comic ceased publication and its best strip TRIGAN EMPIRE went into limbo, the creative artist of TRIGAN, Don Lawrence found new challenges in mainland Europe where he created the long running warrior / soldier of fortune STORM - relatively few Storm episodes have been translated into English so this 46 page story is something of an event. Let's hope that Kevin (Eastman) comes up with more Don Lawrence work in the future.
Other highlights in this first issue of 1997 include a 10 page gallery by Simon Bisley of development concepts for the second Heavy Metal Movie F.A.K.K.2.
ASTROPORT by Azpiri in which his nubile scantily clad heroine as usual looses her clothes in combat with creatures after her luscious bod.
The whole 120 page issue rounded out with the usual shocking shorts including the surreal TIGHTROPE WALKER and the absolutely butt clenching CONTRACT.
US $4.95 UK £3.50
WAREHOUSE PRICE.£1.95

H683: HEAVY METAL SPECIAL EDITION
Fall 1996 Special:
Featuring a 64 page Graphic Novel SINKHA. SINKHA has been five years in the making. In 1991 Italian science fiction author / artist Marco Patrito began to develop a story about a young girl trapped on a foreboding planet. The entire work has been composed using 3D computer graphics. The 64 page story is enhanced by an eight page section which details the genesis of the project, initial and subsequent design work, how many people had to be brought on board and some of the trials and tribulation involved in the project before it came to fruition.
The Fall 1996 Special contains other excellent work as well. Such as TUMBLEWEED by Kordej and Django a wild western style road movie story of intercut realities and dream sequences induced by paranoia and marijuana progressing through ultra violence and culminating weirdly with rites of passage and a chase on a Navaho Reservation.
THE RIDDLE OF THE IRON MASK sets up this elderly, old man who believes that he is, or should be Tin Tin, plus another sexy extravaganza from Azpiri.
US $4.95 UK £3.50
WAREHOUSE PRICE.£1.95

Other issues of Heavy Metal can be found in our current catalogue, available on demand.

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COMIC DEFENSE SYSTEM LIQUIDATION

The Comic Defense System products from Capital City Distribution that we have been successfully supplying to collectors for the last couple of years look like being phased out.

The Comic Defense System Supplies were part of the assets taken on by Diamond Comics Distributors when Capital City lost the distributor wars, spectacularly failed, and closed on July 26, 1996. At the Comics Warehouse we are in negotiation with suppliers so that we can obtain and offer you continued excellence of product.

To clear the decks as it were, we now wish to liquidate a portion of our current inventory of Comic Defence System Supplies.

This liquidation clearance is valid until February 28th 1997, or until stock is exhausted, whichever comes first:

Liquidation Supplies and regular supplies are handled in exactly the same way as back orders, that means that they are processed, picked, checked and shipped as individual self contained orders.

Any out-of-stocks at time of picking will be refunded by way of a refund cheque included in your parcel and credit card customers will have the value of the goods only plus shipping debited to their account.

Please note that the only difference between the "New" or current comic book bag size and the "Silver" age bag size is one quarter of an inch on the width of the bag. This means that current comics will comfortably fit into the "Silver" size bag.

If "New" sizes run out of stock we shall substitute "Silver" sizes to fill your order, unless you specifically request us not to.

Should you actually order "Silver" sizes however, we will know that your first preference is for the fractionally wider bag and therefore we shall not substitute slightly smaller "new" size bags.

Liquidations are restricted to the Comic Defense System (CDS) products advertised on this page only. All other "CDS" products remain at the prices quoted in our current catalogues:

Without further delay: here's our liquidation stock:

PLASTIC DIVIDERS

CD1 COMIC DEFENSE SYSTEM WHITE PLASTIC COMIC DIVIDERS (751000) (180339)
Package of 10 white plastic dividers
£3.83 + 67p VAT = £4.50 _____
Liquidation price £2.50 + 44p VAT = £2.94 _____

CD2 COMIC DEFENSE SYSTEM BLACK PLASTIC COMIC DIVIDERS (751001) (180337)
Package of 10 black plastic dividers
£3.83 + 67p VAT = £4.50 _____
Liquidation price £2.50 + 44p VAT = £2.94 _____

BACKER BOARDS

All-White Backer Boards are made of pure virgin 24 mil. material which is acid-free on both sides at the time of manufacture.

CD6 COMIC DEFENSE SYSTEM ALL-WHITE NEW BOARDS 100 Packs (721000) (140120)
100 All-White New Comic Size Backer Boards.
New Comic Size is 6 3/4 x 10 1/2
£5.92 + £1.03 VAT =£6.95 _____
Liquidation price £3.50 + 61p VAT = £4.11 _____

CD8 COMIC DEFENSE SYSTEM ALL-WHITE SILVER BOARDS 100 Packs(721001) (140121)
100 All-White Silver Age Comic Size Backer Boards.
Silver Age Size is 7 x 10 1/2
£5.92 + £1.03 VAT =£6.95 _____
Liquidation price.£3.50 + 61p VAT = £4.11 _____

CD11 COMIC DEFENSE SYSTEM ALL-WHITE MAGAZINE BOARDS (721003) (180316) Pack of 50
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ProBags are made of super-clear polypropylene with superior preservation characteristics and packaged attractively. They come in standard sizes and are approximately 2.4mil thick.

CD18 NEW PROBAGS (712000) (175290/294)
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£2.98 + 52p VAT = £3.50 _____
Liquidation price £1.99 + 35p VAT = £2.34 _____

PLEASE NOTE: When supplies of "New" Probags are exhausted, the "Silver" Probags (exactly the same just one quarter of an inch wider) will be substituted and sent out to complete your order unless you specifically state that the fractionally wider size is not required.

CD19 SILVER PROBAGS (712001) (175294)
100 Silver Age Comic Size ProBags.
Silver Age Size is 7 1/8 x 10 1/2 with a 1 1/2 flap.
£2.98 + 52p VAT =£3.50 _____
Liquidation price £1.99 + 35p VAT = £2.34 _____

PRO-LYTES

Pro-lytes are 1mm thick poly propylene bags. Thinner bags means that you can pack more into a box.

PLEASE NOTE: the only difference between "New" comic size and "Silver" comic size is one quarter of an inch in the width of the bag: this means that all current comics will comfortably fit into the "silver" bags.

CD22 NEW PRO-LYTES (710000) (197559)
100 New Comic Size Pro-Lytes (1ml thick)
new size is 6 7/8 x 10 1/2 with a 1 1/2" flap.
£1.75 + 31p VAT = £2.06 _____
Liquidation Price £1.25 + 22p VAT = £1.47 _____

NB: As with Pro-Bags and Collector Shields should our supply of "New" size bags become exhausted the "Silver" size will be dispatched unless you specifically request us not to.

CD23 SILVER PRO-LYTES (710001) (197558)
100 Silver Size Pro-Lytes (1ml thick).
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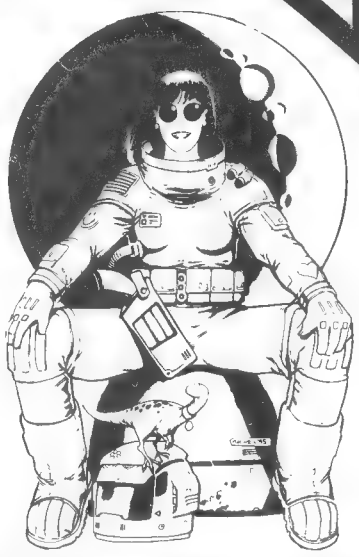

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COMMENT

Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry.

As such, the opinions following do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Editing of accepted manuscripts will be done only as a matter of grammar, clarity and space considerations. though brevity is recommended

Nottingham's Page 45: a role model for comic shops?

Comment by Andy Roberts, Oxford

I WAS one of an impressively large crowd attending the recent Independents Day signing, organised by Nottingham's Page 45 comic shop.

I've not been to Nottingham before, and as well as extending a public "thanks and well done" to Steve Holland and colleagues for an excellent, well-thought-out event, I'd like to share some observations.

It's been said before, but it needs saying again — and often — that shops like Page 45 represent the only long-term hope for comics retailing. Visiting the shop for the first time, I was stunned by the difference to your average comic shop. As you walk in (passing a great window display featuring, when I went, papier-mache **Beanworld** figures) you are immediately faced with a shelf-display of collections and graphic novels from **Jim** to **Optic Nerve** to **Love & Rockets** to ... etc.

To your left is a wall of humour books, where I found a Matt Feazell collection I'd lost hope of seeing in this country. Go round the bookcase of collections and you find several spacious alcoves displaying, in a browser-friendly way, indie comics and some small press.

At the back you find the superhero stuff, displayed with equal care but as far from the entrance as possible.

On the other side of the shop are shelves of manga and back-issues, T-shirts and other accessories. The shop is clean and stylish, the staff are friendly and positively eager to help.

The whole operation is designed to appeal to any passing potential customer; attractive, relaxed, with room to move around, and the muscles-and-tights material out of harm's way.

This is not to criticise superhero comics as such. But while shops rely so heavily on this small market for their bread and butter trade, they are in thrall to an unstable source of income with a very doubtful future. Superheroes are a fine and fun genre for kids of all ages. But they're a dead end for our shrinking business.

Now, many shops are a good deal more cramped than Page 45, and can't, therefore, duplicate their display methods. But I really don't think most retailers are even thinking about how to get the general public into their stores.

One of my regular haunts is Comics Showcase in London. This long, thin shop has new and recent comics down one wall, a double-sided shelf down the middle, and back issues at the back and on the other wall. This arrangement makes a long, thin shop longer and thinner, and when there's more than a couple of people browsing, it's extremely difficult to get around the place.

The one concession to non-comics aficionados is a display of humour books by the door. Very few people who weren't used to comic shops would want to go any further.

Comic Showcase could put more (or all) of their back issues in its hardly used downstairs area — where comics nuts like me would still be perfectly happy to go and rummage — get rid of the central shelf and install tall alcove shelves to display all its stuff much more comfortably, thereby providing customers with room to actually walk around.

Comic Showcase is bang in the middle of Covent Garden, yet its window display shows no sense of the arty, pretty atmosphere of the area. But I

don't want to single out Comic Showcase; most other shops are as bad.

I've only visited Skinny Melink's once, for instance, because despite its fab back issue selection, the shop looks like a squat. Camden's Mega-City Comics makes little imaginative use of a huge shop floor. And so on.

Gosh is an exception, but its wonderful display of indies, European albums and classic strip collections is hidden away down a spiral staircase in the basement. Your casual shopper, attracted by the nice window display, would think twice before entering.

The crammed bookshelves of **X-Men** collections and superhero comics should be downstairs. Comic shop regulars will still go in as long as their favourites are on sale; it doesn't matter where you put them.

The fight is to get some of the other people, who currently think of comics as a weird, fannish hobby thing, off the streets and into the shops. I'm sure retailers will tell me various reasons why they can't change the way they work: Fine; they're unlikely to be in business five or ten years from now.

Shops like Page 45 (are there any others?) really are showing the way forward

Perchance to dream...

Comment by Rick Appleby, Dream Comics, New Barnet, Herts.

I LIST below (in no discernable order) my top ten "things" that I'd like to see happen in the comics industry in 1997...

Ten: Marvel gets its distribution and invoicing right.

Nine: We see an end to the publishers' distribution exclusives.

Eight: There will be less frequent comic marts, particularly in the same city.

Seven: Regular comic book price guides (updates) to appear... preferably within **Comics International**.

Six: Jim Shooter produces a comic book which reaches double figures.

Five: A British Comic Books Retailers Association is formed.

Four: Rob Liefeld stops producing crap comics.

Three: A quality, not quantity, of product.

Two: There will be *no more crossovers!*

One: An end to mini-series. (Can't publishers count beyond the number four anymore?)

Living in a parallel world

Comment by Graham Marshland, Thorne, Yorkshire

IT SUDDENLY struck me that, in so far as comics are concerned, British publishers are as good as living in a parallel world to their US equivalents.

The paths were almost identical from a hundred years back right up to the 1940s.

Both started out as anthologies, invariably in black and white, and both aimed at a more adult audience than they finally descended to. Okay, so US comics grew out of repacking newspaper strips (usually read by adults, hence the older initial readership) whereas UK comics grew out of satirical political cartoons (again aimed at adults).

But then, America discovered superheroes (major mistake!). While Britain had no need for such contemporary legendary heroes, having ancient legendary heroes to aspire to, this was where the two paths diverged.

Dan Dare or Captain Hurricane never got their own comics (and it took Judge Dredd over 10 years to get his), but the American superheroes not only got their own titles and took over, but they did so in mere months!

Thanks to the superhero, comics became drugs and US readers needed specialist shops, so they wouldn't miss a hit at the newsstands. But then the specialist direct market system started to go wrong...

In Britain, anthology titles continued to dominate. Then the trade terms were changed to sale-or-return, and the print runs plummeted. And then the newsstand system started to go wrong... Parallel worlds?

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Mad about Madureira

Chris Fern, Canterbury, Kent

Q PLEASE can you give me a list of all the work artist Joe Madureira has done before the *Age of Apocalypse* storyline in the **X-Men** books?

A *This is a bit of a tough one. When he started, Madureira's style was somewhat derivative of Arthur Adams and it wasn't until he got the regular penciller job on **Uncanny X-Men** that he developed his manga style. But that's an aside. From what I can gather, his first professional work for Marvel was **Excalibur** #58, but he had been doing some covers prior to this 1993 comic. Before becoming the permanent penciller on **Uncanny X-Men** he pencilled assorted issues of **Excalibur**, culminating with issue #75, which actually stated that he was to become the regular penciller on the title! Shortly after this he appeared at Image Comics on the **Vanguard** series and also was involved in a **Savage Dragon** story with Erik Larsen.*

*He returned to Marvel late 1994 as regular penciller on **X-Men** with issue #312. Over to Dez for the dull bit...* *Phil Hall*

Career highlights follow:
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Why pseudonyms?

David Gentle, School Road, Romsey, Hants

Q WHY did writers and artists bother to use pseudonyms in the old days? Was it just bashfulness or is there more to it?

A *There's more to it, David. The old (Charlton Comics) **Peter Cannon, Thunderbolt** provides a perfect example. The strips were always singed PAM, leading many to believe that they were the work of editor Pat Masulli. But they were actually being produced by a New York cop, moonlighting and not wanting his superiors to find out. Pete Morissi, a disciple of the great Alex Toth drew **Thunderbolt** for the money, but would have been fired had he been found out doing outside work.*

Often artists, writers and even editors are contracted to one company, but chose to moonlight. Other times, they're either embarrassed by a rush job or don't want to be seen to be giving themselves work (Sergius O'Shaunessey being a Charlton pseudonym for Denny O'Neill in the late 1960s).

*To reminisce about the '80s, we were worried with **Warrior** that five out of six strips were written by two non-related Moores (Steve and Alan) and the sixth strip by another Steve (Parkhouse). For this reason, Steve Moore nobly agreed to revive his Pedro Henry pseudonym when writing Zirk and Pressbutton, then it wouldn't look too much like the magazine was a closed shop (for people called Steve or Moore!).*

...Dez Skinn

Dan DeCarlo

Mark Jones, Hyde, Cheshire

Q DO you have any information on the career and work of Dan DeCarlo — the very stylish cartoonist who produced the *Willie Lumpkin* strip with Stan Lee in the '50s?

A *Throughout the 1980s and 1990s DeCarlo has been a mainstay artist at Archie Comics and he currently pencils **Betty & Veronica**, **Cheryl Blossom**, **Sabrina, the Teenage Witch** and a number of other humour books for the company. His most interesting departures have been on **Batman Adventures Annual** 1, 1992's **Outer Space Babes**, **Penthouse Comics** 2, **Thor** 487, and 1995's **Vampirella Pin-Up Special**.* *...Dez*

Shipping dates

Q How come *Advance Listings* no longer supplies weekly shipping dates? I used to find it quite handy.

A *When the distribution system started getting messy, many of the companies stopped putting actual shipping dates (possibly to avoid being fined by the distributors for late shipping), we took a decision to list titles alphabetically, rather than in weeks. All to make it easier for you to spot titles, without having to look fown four or five different week's worth of shipping lists.*

But, starting this issue we are responding to your plea, and have reinstated the shipping dates, in brackets and italics at the end of each individual listing.

However, only a handful of companies are confident enough to provide shipping dates, so you will only find them for DC, Marvel, Dark Horse and some Image titles. ...Phil

Eagle Awards

Q Are the Eagle Awards still going? I've not heard anything about them for a long time.

A *Almost, yes. They were to be the centre-stage of Kev Sutherland and Mark Buckingham's current National Comics Week, delighting awards originator and current keeper of the flame Mike Cornoy, who had been unable to devote time to relaunching them himself. Sadly, it all got complicated through third parties' intervention and the Eagles were dropped. Maybe next time...* *Dez*

Alf & Bart

Q Okay, so just who were *Dear Alf & Bart* anyway? (That bloody dates me, doesn't it?)

A *Me, too. Attempting to be the UK answer to Marvel's "Stan & Jack", Alf (Cosser) and Bart (Bartholomew) were editorial bods at Odhams Press in the 1960s who were saddled with producing the (pre-Marvel UK) reprints. Under the Power Comics imprint, the editor and art editor, respectively, became the figureheads who readers would write in to on **Pow! Wham! Smash! Terrific!** and **Fantastic!** When Odhams was absorbed into IPC, Alf went off to **TV Times**, Bart ended up on **Look & Learn**.*

Ah, what obscure information we treasure! *...Dez*

The Krazy Gang

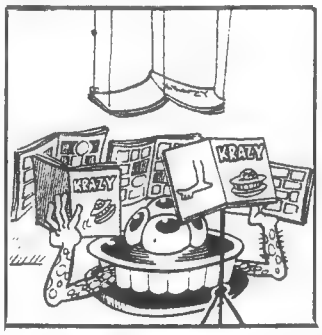
John Michael, Mackintosh Pl Roath, Cardiff

Q I WOULD genuinely like to know why it was decided to surreptitiously nudge *Freaky* out of *The Krazy Gang*, when *Krazy* was engulfed by **Whizzer & Chips**? He was the only character I liked.

A *That's more like it. Critical issues of the day to be discussed! IPC's **Krazy** was meant to be the next step forward in juvenile humour titles. So it took (marginally) bigger chances. But it failed, and was merged into the more traditional **Whizzer & Chips** after only 79 issues (1976-1978).*

While the namesake characters, The Krazy Gang, survived the

merger, Blue, Liz, Sporty, Brainy and Cheeky's alien pal, Freaky (a three-eyed, toothy flying saucer) was obviously considered too radical for IPC. A moment's silence please.



McKean's first

Cicconi Giulio, Teramo, Italy

Q I'M a great fan of Dave McKean and I'm interested in Dave's early works (the ones before his initial assignments for DC Comics).

Could you list all Dave's published works before the release of **Violent Cases**? For instance, I know that before being published as a full colour graphic novel, this story was serialised in a British magazine. Could you tell me the name of this magazine and the publisher's address? Are the issues hard to find? And do you know if Dave has any upcoming projects in the works?

A *I can't tell you what Dave's work prior to **Violent Cases** or his **The Sandman** covers were, but I can reveal that his first ever published work was when he was a 13-year-old wannabe.*

*In a fanzine I produced in the late 1970s, called **Media**, I printed his first comics pictures. In those days, Dave was a John Buscema clone, but as I pointed out in my editorial in **Media** #12, I forecast a bright future for him, and said that one day he would make it big in the comics industry. ...Phil*

*All I can recall of his early work is Vortex's **Mister X** #11 (1987) leading into his **Hellblazer** and **Swamp Thing** covers the following year, culminating in **Arkham Asylum** (in 1989). **Violent Cases** was originally produced by **Escape Magazine**'s Paul Gravett and published in 1987 by Titan Books. A second edition, the colour one you mention, wasn't released until 1991. But I'm confident our readership can tell us more in four weeks' time! ...Dez*

David Jackson

Tim Barnes, Anorak City

Q WHAT ever happened to David "Shandor" Jackson? I really enjoyed his work, but apart from a two-issue James Bond effort, I haven't seen anything from him recently?

A *David was somewhat typecast at the start of his professional career, he got stuck with drawing the Mummy film adaptations in the ill-fated **House of Hammer**. Like fellow Geordie Angus McKie, he then went into the world of SF book jackets, resurfacing in comics in the 1980 **2000AD Annual**, drawing a Judge Dredd and an Alan Grant Tharg strip.*

*Foolishing returning to our own Quality Communications, he then took, over Shandor from John Bolton for the ill-fated **Warrior**.*

*With Alan Booth, he created the strip Legend. But as that was for the ill-fated **Pssst!** Magazine, only one episode was published.*

*Since then he has produced two strips starring Jaremsheela, Shadnor's nemesis, for the ill-fated **A1** anthology title, and various visuals for Oxford University Press, Lion Publishing and "loads of here and there". His only recent comics work has been that 2-issue James Bond effort for Dark Horse in 1993.*

But as he still hasn't got his original art back after four years, he's understandably reluctant to do more comics work. ...Dez

Mandrake & co

Tue Sorensen, Bentesvej 55
DK 8220, Brabrand, Denmark

Q 1) DO you know what issues of **Firestorm** were drawn by **The Spectre**'s Tom Mandrake?

A *Not for sure, but Mandrake, better known for his brief run on **New Mutants** and apparently a protege of Sal Buscema, drew most issues of **Firestorm** from about issue #80 onwards ...Phil*

PAD's JLTF

Q 2) Which issues did Peter David write of **Justice League Task Force**? And which issues were by Christopher Priest?

A *Peter David wrote the controversial three-issue League of Heroines story in **JLTF** issues #7-9. The reason this story is regarded as controversial is because J'onn J'Onnz, the shapeshifting Martian Manhunter, transformed into a woman for the mission. He gathers a number of super-females together and, in the finale, the "female" J'Onn J'Onzz passionately kisses one of the heroines. Heady stuff, eh? ...Phil*

Starlin's Gods

Q 3) Can you tell me which issues of The DC title **New Gods** were drawn by Jim Starlin?

A *Starlin drew the cover to **New Gods** Volume #1 #17 and he scripted issues #2-4 of **New Gods** volume 3 (1989).*

ANSWER UPDATES
or... New As for old Qs

Stan's uncle?

Chris Harper
AmpCon@dircon.co.uk

A REGARDING Dez's mention of Stan Lee being Martin Goodman's nephew in a recent **CI**: I think it's high time to set the record straight once and for all, before a mass audience!

Stan Lee's uncle was *not* Martin Goodman, but a fellow named Robert Solomon, who was Goodman's business manager.

However, there is a family connection — Goodman was Solomon's brother-in-law!

I'm not sure what that makes him in relation to Stan, but I don't think it's "uncle"! Anyone want to figure this one out?

With due thanks to Mark Evanier who revealed this little-known fact a while back via the medium of email.

Deadpool notes

Ian Sharman,
PSharman@aol.com

A IN *Q&A* (**CI**#76) Mike Bradbury asked "Is The-Merc-With-A-Mouth, Deadpool, a mutant or not?" Your reply was that Deadpool is a mutant. However, the writer of **Deadpool**, Joe Kelly, recently responded to a similar question online in a post on the Marvel message board at the Comic Book Forum at the Fictional Realm site on AOL (Keyword: fictional realm, for those of you on AOL).

He wrote - "As per the Mutant/non-mutant question, Deadpool is most definitely *not* a mutant. He was a regular schmoe who got cancer, and was offered a cure by the Weapon X program.

"The treatment was a success, it cured the cancer, but as a side effect, caused his skin to be in a constant state of healing. This has left him in dire need of skin so soft body lotion, and pretty durn angry. I hope that settles it!"

One would assume that he knows what he's talking about (although with X-title writers you can never be too sure).

Actually, I (Phil here) would be inclined to doubt the history of Joe Kelly's reply. According to an interview with Rob Liefeld many moons ago, he stated that Deadpool was a mutant. Fabian Nicieza, the scripter for the first eight appearances of the character also believed him to be a mutant.

Kelly, a graduate from the Marvel School of Excellence (a writing

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academy) is a relative newcomer to the ways and wherefores of the mutants and obviously feels that Wade's (Deadpool's real name) history needs rewriting. Liefeld, when asked about the character, summed him up like this, "He's an animated dead mutant!". Go figure.

More pocket books

Ross McGibbon, Leeds

ARE: the Spider-Man pocket books. I remember them reaching about issue #28 (at least three issues past your normal run!) as did most of the others, although distribution got a bit ropy at the end.

Hats off to Dez for having the idea for them. They were a cheap and cheerful way of starting right at the beginning of some classics, rather than **Masterworks** at thirty quid a pop.

But don't go knocking Marvel UK's landscape precursors — they got a lot of us started!

Northstar music

Alan Ng, 7 East Grove Victoria Park, Manchester

AREGARDING Nomi Suhail's question about the soundtrack of the anime cartoon *Fist of the Northstar*:

There are actually two soundtracks. They were produced for the animated series and the movie. One is the music and the other is all the songs (in Japanese).

I have bought the "original songs" one from Japan, about seven years ago. So, Nomi, if you are interested in having a copy, please contact me.

REH chronology

Krier Frederic, Luxembourg

AIN **Savage Sword of Conan** #219, there was some sort of Solomon Kane (Robert E. Howard's puritan hero) chronology, which was in fact rather confusing and didn't help sorting them out. It tells us:

1) There was an original R.E. Howard adaptation titled **Skulls in the Stars** that appeared in "Mu-1". This abbreviation didn't figure in the listing given in the editor's note. My guess is it's **Monsters Unleashed** #1 (though it's hard to see the connection between Kane and monsters).

2) They also mention an original Kane exploit called *Satan's Sanctuary*, which was reprinted in **Conan Saga** #50, though as editor Richard Ashford notes, "even we've forgotten where that one originally appeared! Anyone care to enlighten us?".

Apparently no one did, at least not on the letters page.

3) The third mess up I could sort out myself: Mp-19 is **Marvel Preview** #19; whereas Mp-34,35 is **Marvel Premiere** #34-35.

Lee/Kirby rift

Fabio P Barbieri, London

ACHRIS Ash's comment that "he is not aware of any obvious parting flourish" when Jack Kirby left Stan Lee's Marvel in 1970 staggered me. Is it possible he hasn't read **Mr Miracle** #6?

Featuring the rascally agent Funky Flashman trying to sign up Mr Miracle's act, the whole book is one sustained blast of mocking invective such as Steve Ditko never even came close to matching, showing a totally unexpected talent for personal satire. Stan L... oh, beg pardon, Funky, is a slavedriver, a backstabber, a rip-off merchant, a phoney, bent on making money without working. The kind of man who would throw his own lick-spittle Houseroy (now who do you think *he* was meant for?) to the wolves if and when it suited him.

Kirby (who must have had the seed of a literary critic in him) made merciless and successful fun of Lee's showy brand of English and his use and abuse of quotations, and even played up his futile passion to be in Hollywood, years before Lee relocated there.

Worst of all, he accused Lee of wearing a toupee!

Funky Flashman was later resurrected by Gerry Conway (another man with his own views on The Man) in one of Conway's better efforts, **Secret Society of Super-Villains**. The Lee similarities were still impossible to miss.

I'm not aware of any further use of the character, except for a hilarious Kirby drawing in **DC Universe Who's Who** (1985).

I think however we may go too far taking the artists' side. As I pointed out in **Jack Kirby Quarterly** #7, Lee had excellent reasons to ignore Kirby's ideas for the Silver Surfer (which is said to be Kirby's main casus belli).

And if Wally Wood insisted on making Matt (Daredevil) Murdock sighted, then I for one am on Lee's side.

Ditko is said to have quit Marvel because Lee turned down his idea of who the Goblin was going to be — someone Peter Parker had never met before. Well, Lee was right: Ditko had already used that stunt once (in the Crime-Master story) and more than once is wrong.

Kaluta checklist

Tim Barnes, Anorak City

AKALUTA — a very good checklist appeared in 1988's **The Michael Wm Kaluta Treasury**. His earliest pro comics were three stories for Charlton. I've traced two of these: **Teen Confessions** #59 (12/69) and **Flash Gordon** #13 (1/70).

The other story was due to be published before these two.

Could I also correct some misreading of my godawful handwriting which slightly corrupted the info printed in **CI** #75: Under Euro Starbuck, Kristy Adams sent me colour photocopies of *some of the art*; Under Adams Update, it was the Peter Scratch *dailies* which were reprinted.

Greene & Shores

AIn response to Chris Ash (**CI** #74), Sid Greene and Syd Shores are separate people, as a comparison of their markedly different styles should confirm. I'd be interested in specifics where Chris thinks there have been incorrect art identifications in textbooks and the like.

In my experience it's the writing credits which are inaccurate or missing — look at EC reprints for example, which gave no writing credits. I think only Robin Snyder (in his **The Comics**) has made any attempt to correct such inaccuracies and inadequacies.

I have loads of additional information on the work of Jeff Jones, largely through a checklist prepared for a companion volume to Glimmer Graphics' Kaluta Treasury. According to the brief biography in Robert Weinberg's **Biographical Dictionary of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists**, his first published work was in something called **Georgia Golf**. The earliest I can confirm is *Ku! Primordial* in **Fantasy Illustrated** #4 (summer 1965). Overstreet gives his first pro work as **Pow magazine** #2, which would be late 1966, but I've not been able to confirm this.

First pro comic work I believe was in **Ripley's Believe It or Not** #5 (June 1967), although Tiefenbacher and Klein's index gives Andre LeBlanc as artist.

Then came work for Warren starting with the August 1967 issue of **Creepy**, stories in the September 1967 issues of **Mandrake** and **The Phantom** from King. Then there are numerous paperbacks (I lost count after 150) some with Bernie Wrightson and several hardbacks including two different

from King. Then there are numerous paperbacks (I lost count after 150) some with Bernie Wrightson and several hardbacks including two different versions of **Red Shadows** from Donald Grant and (would you believe) a cookery book.

And as far as I know, **Pursuit on Ganymede** although appearing in bibliographies as having cover art by Jeff Jones doesn't. (As a matter of interest, Nardelli's **Frazetta Index** of 1975 credits the cover to Frank, also, in my opinion, incorrectly).

Lois & Clark

A Incidentally, I wrote to the Beeb about the retitling of *Lois and Clark*. Their Lee Rogers told me it "was simply because we felt this would appeal to a wider audience." Isn't this simply the most euphemistic way of saying that they feel the licence-paying public are too stupid to know who Lois and Clark are?

Vertigo teaser

Steve Holland uworldst@uworldst.demon.co.uk

A I have the following promo and one-shot Vertigo titles noted:

Vertigo Preview (1992; Extracts from Death: The High Cost of Living, Enigma, Sandman Mystery Theatre, Mercy, Kid Eternity, Sebastian O, Black Orchid, Animal Man, Doom Patrol, Hellblazer, Shade the Changing Man, and Swamp Thing. Includes one original story: Sandman: Fear of Falling by Neil Gaiman, art by Kent Williams)

Vertigo Jam (8/93; contains Sandman: The Castle by Neil Gaiman, art by Kevin Nowlan; Hellblazer: Tainted Love by Garth Ennis, art by Steve Dillon; Animal Man: Talking Turkey by Jamie Delano, art by Scot Eaton/Mark Pennington; Doom Patrol: Spooks Return Satisfied by Rachel Pollack, art by Eric Shanower; Swamp Thing: The Ghost in the Green by Nancy A. Collins, art by Phillip Hester/Kim Demulder; Kid Eternity: He Who Falls by Ann Nocenti, art by Duncan Fegrado & Sean Phillips; Shade: The Vision by Peter Milligan, art by Michael Allred)

Vertigo Encyclopedia (1993) Text by Michael R. Smith Vertigo Rave (Fall (9) 1994; Extracts from Mobfire, Face, Kill Your Boyfriend, Tainted, Shadows Fall, Mr Punch, The Sandman, Hellblazer, The Invisibles, Animal Man, Sandman Mystery Theatre and Shade the Changing Man. Includes one original story: The Books of Magic: The Lot by John Ney Rieber, art by Gary Amaro/Dick Giordano)

Absolute Vertigo (Winter 1995) Extracts from The Eaters, Jonah Hex, Preacher, Ghostdancing, Hellblazer, Goddess. Includes an artists jam and one orginal story: King Mob: Hexy by Grant Morrison, art by Duncan Fegrado)

The only other one I can think of off the top of my head was the Gaiman/McKean *Death Talks About Sex* one-shot that was later reprinted in an issue of Sandman.

2000AD's Slaine

A With artwork by Glenn Fabry and Dermot Power, this story appeared in **2000AD** Progs 852-859 (11 Sep-30 Oct 1993).

Double double UK rebinds

A I don't know about the Marvel Collections, but the Double-Double series was produced by Thorpe & Porter from 1967 until the 1970s.

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Crow movie III

A *The Crow: City of Angels* was something of a flop, making only $17.9 million in the USA, but the budget was only $25m.

International ticket sales and subsequent video release should see the movie in the black (although it'll doubtlessly be deeply in the red according to its accountants!).

This might not help, but the thrust of the story is that the Crow would bring back someone different each time, so if a third movie was made it presumably wouldn't star Vincent Perez.

Gary Frank

A Gary published his first work soon after leaving school, having approached Dan Abnett with samples which led to some fill-in work on Marvel annuals.

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■ **Incognito**, 21 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) Phone/fax 01622-683642

■ **Silver Acre Comics**, PO Box 114, Chester CH 4WQ (s-wants, cc) 07000-266 427

■ **Vault Comics**, PO Box 257, South Norwood, London SE25 6JN (wants, cc, cat) 0181 771 8278

SILVER AGE TITLES

*Generally deemed to commence in 1955 with DC Comics' hero rebirth through **Detective 225** (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and **Showcase 4** (introducing the new Flash), herein covering up to late 1960s.*

■ **Comic Biz**, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 0181 446 3464

■ **Cosmic Comics**, PO Box 1771, London E17 9PW. (cat, CoBRA, cc)

■ **Incognito**, 21 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) Phone/fax 01622-683642

■ **Just Comics**, 2 Crossmead Avenue, Greenford, Middx UB6 9TY (cat-29p, CoBRA)

■ **Mighty World of Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis cat CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

■ **Select Comics**, PO Box 39, Derby DE1 9TD (cat, wants) 01332-340984

■ **Silver Acre Comics**, PO Box 114, Chester CH 4WQ (s-wants, cc) 07000 266 427

■ **Vault Comics**, PO Box 257, South Norwood, London SE25 6JN (wants, cc, cat) 0181 771 8278

POST-SILVER AGE

Comics from the 1970s to date: Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

■ **Comics Warehouse**, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 850351

■ **Cosmic Comics**, PO Box 1771, London E17 9PW. (cat, cc, CoBRA)

■ **Richard Makinson**, 9 George Street, Ossett, West Yorkshire WF5 9PB (s-cat, dis)

■ **Mighty World of Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis cat CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

NEW **Neverland Comics**, 17 Spurgeon Score, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 1XB (s-cat, s-wants, dis)

HOT COMICS

Current or key titles, usually first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

■ **Comics Unlimited**, 4 Clair St, Lime St, Bedford MK40 1NH (cat, s-wants, CoBRA, cc) 01234 365522

■ **Mighty World of Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis cat CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

ADVANCE IMPORTS

US comics are not in newsagents, except for most DCs and some Marvels, shipped seafreight. The following offer air-shipped copies from all major publishers.

■ **ACE Comics**, 1 Headgate Buildings, St Johns St, Colchester, Essex CO2 7AD (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG (s-cat cc)0171 497 2150

■ **Gosh! Strips by Mail**, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 0171 636 1011

■ **Mega-City Comics**, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ (s-cat, cc, CoBRA) 0171 485 9320

■ **Mighty World of Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis cat CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

■ **Red Hot Comics**, The Warehouse, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Centre, 141 Castlemilk Drive, Glasgow G45 9UG (CoBRA, s-wants, sae, dis) phone/fax: 0141-630 0049

■ **Time Zone**, 12 Fish Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR (dis, cat, wants) 01743 365192

LIMITED EDITIONS

Many high-profile mini-series and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

■ **Mighty World of Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, Herts EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n) 0181-449 5535

TRADING CARDS

An increasing number of dealers carry a wide range of comics-related trading cards and their peripherals (files, folders, etc).

■ **Beyond Comics & Books**, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax 0171 639 7171

■ **C&J Collectibles**, 14 Church Ave., Swillington, West Yorks LS26 8QH (s-cat, CoBRA) 0113-287 3228

■ **Comics Unlimited**, 4 Clair St, Lime St, Bedford MK40 1NH (cat, s-wants, CoBRA, cc) 01234 365522

■ **Discount Trading Cards**, 3 Waterford Ave, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 4HL (cat, wants, dis, CoBRA) 0161 427 1867

■ **First Choice Cards**, 11 Keith Ave, Liverpool L4 5SL (cat wants CoBRA)0831 765811

■ **Mighty World of Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis cat

CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

■ **MTCC Trading Cards,** c/o In Retrospect, 107-109 Orpington High St, Orpington, Kent BR6 0LG. (w/s dis s-wants cc) 01689 835700

■ **Next Millennium,** 14 Newark Way Hendon London NW4 4JL (wants) 0181-203 0014

OLD BRITISH TITLES

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

■ **Comic Biz,** PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 0181 446 3464

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order,** 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, cat, cc) 0181-659 9714

■ **Dark Star Comics,** 18 Golden Ball Lane, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 6NW (s-cat, s-wants, 2000AD/Fleetway specialist)

■ **Ken Harman Old Comics & Pulps** (wants; call for details) 0181 771 8756

ORIGINAL ART

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available.

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order,** 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, cat, cc) 0181-659 9714

PORTFOLIOS & PRINTS

Specialists in high quality images, of American, Japanese and/or European origin.

■ **A & A Prints,** Royal Buildings, Pwllhai, Cardigan, Dyfed SA43 1BZ (w/s, s-cat) ph/fax 01239 621 004

MERCHANDISE

Comics and film/tv-related t-shirts, posters, video games, video films, badges, toys, etc.

■ **Comics Unlimited,** 4 Clair St, Lime St, Bedford MK40 1NH (cat, s-wants, CoBRA, cc) 01234 365522

■ **Mighty World of Comicana,** 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis cat CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

■ **Off World: The Sci-Fi Store,** Unit 20, Romford Shopping Halls, Market Place, Romford, Essex RM1 3AT. (specialists in Trek, Star Wars & s-f collectables) 01708 765633

■ **Time Zone,** 12 Fish St, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR (dis, cat, wants) 01743 365192

COMICS AUCTIONS

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions can provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their comics.

■ **Comic Book Postal Auctions Limited,** 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 0171 586 3007

■ **Vault Comic Auctions,** PO Box 257, South Norwood, London SE25 6JN (cc, cat) 0181 771 8278

PERIPHERALS

Acid-free protection for valuable comics. Backing boards, bags, storage boxes, etc.

■ **Incognito,** 21 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) Phone/fax 01622-683642

■ **Just Comics,** 2 Crossmead Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 9TY (w/s only, CoBRA) 0181 578 1308

■ **Mighty World of Comicana,** 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, CoBRA, cc) 0181-449 5535

MANGA TITLES

English language translations and Japanese-style American comics.

■ **Comics Unlimited,** 4 Clair St, Lime St, Bedford MK40 1NH (cat, s-wants, CoBRA, cc) 01234 365522

■ **United Publications,** 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU Tel: 0181 325 9507. Email: UP@lupin.demon.co.uk (ind, back, s-p, cat, wants, cc)

ART & REFERENCE

Comics history reference magazines & books (ref) plus art books (art) and newspaper strip compilations (strip).

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order,** 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, ref, art, strip, cat, cc) 0181-659 9714

ALTERNATIVE & BIOG

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life titles (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar, etc)

■ **Gosh! Strips by Mail,** 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 0171 636 1011

■ **Knockabout Comics,** 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 0181 969 2945 (fax: 0181 968 7614)

■ **Page 45,** 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. 0115 9508045

AMERICAN COMICS DISTRIBUTORS

Anybody considering opening a comics specialist shop can obtain further information about the supply of titles from any of the following wholesalers, who air-freight bulk copies of North American comics and related items into Britain on a weekly basis:

■ **Diamond Comic Distributors,** Unit 1, Empson St, London E3 3LT (DC, Image, Dark Horse, Viz, Kitchen Sink... exclusivity + assorted product) 0171 538 8300

■ **Marvel International Distribution,** 897 Plymouth Road, Slough SL1 4LR (Marvel titles exclusively) 01753 567 765

■ **Palan Distribution,** Unit 1, 1 Morie Street, London SW18 1SL (assorted product) 0181 870 4300

■ **United Publications,** 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (inc Antarctic, Mu and Vision) Tel/fax: 0181 325 9507. Email: UP@lupin.demon.co.uk

In addition, many DC and Marvel titles are available to newstrade outlets from national UK distributors, who ship sea-freight from America.

■ **IPC Market Force** (selected Marvel US standard format titles only) 0171 261 5555

■ **Portman Distribution** (selected range of DC comics only) 01533 693861

ADVERTISING RATES

Postal Traders: ***Comics International****'s Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way of advertising to a huge yet dedicated audience in excess of 35,000 every month. Each single category entry costs only £3.00 a month (plus VAT), and is bookable as a 6-issue series.*

Trading name, address and relevant details — as described in the above abbreviations code — should be sent together with a pre-payment of £18 plus VAT (£21.15 total, to cover the full 6 months) for each section to:

GRADING GUIDE

One of the most problematic areas of buying, selling or valuing comics is grading them. A value can vary by as much as 50% through inaccurate assessment of the condition or grade of the item. The days of a comic being "good condition for its age" disappeared with decimalisation.

With the ever-spiralling values for old comics, the art of grading has become a science. The more expensive titles often carrying a percentage "score", between 100 (mint) and 1 (poor). Defects such as graffiti, shop stamps, taped spine and loose staples *should* be mentioned outside of the grade, with the value reduced accordingly (usually one grade down). To help people assess the grading of their collections better, we present the following definitions:

MINT CONDITION [m] (100%):
An almost impossible acquisition. A comic is mint when it is printed. But it then is counted, stacked, boxed, shipped, counted again, despatched again, counted again and racked in a store. By the time you buy it, it will be near mint at best. Collectors and dealers hardly ever list mint comics. When they do, selling prices are almost always "multiple guide" (ie. Two, three or more times the price stated for a mint copy in the price guides).
M has no defects whatsoever. It retains its cover gloss (or lustre) and has sharp corners. No printing or binding defects. Staples centred, fresh and shiny. Literally as new.

NEAR MINT [nm++, nm+, nm, nm-, nm--] (97-90%)
The acknowledged top grade. A particularly handsome copy in near mint is often referred to as nm+, whereas one almost near mint is referred to as nm-. The more expensive the comic, the more precise the grading, with some dealers using the addtional emphasis of nm++ or nm--. We're talking only a 5% difference in price, but on a £1000 or more item, that's £50 a +!
NM has no instantly apparent defects. A very slight defect is permissible, such as a binding or printing mistake. No fading, spine roll or cover surface wear beyond the smallest corner crease or very slight stress around staples. Cover well centred, still flat and without wear. Spine tight and flat. Interior pages clean white and supple.

VERY FINE [vf or vfn, from ++ to --] (89-75%)
Still an excellent copy, as much as 25% cheaper than a near mint copy, but with minimal wear beginning to show. Still sharp, clean and bright.
VFN has several very minor defects. Cover: almost flat, minimal surface wear. Slight wear and very small corner creasing. Staples may be slightly discoloured. Corners may have minute wear. Up to one half-inch light cover crease is acceptable. Interior paper may be slightly off-white.

FINE [fn, from ++ to --] (74-55%)
Not to be confused with fr or f, the abbreviations for the much lower grade of FAIR. Fine is quite a collectable grade. No major creasing or defects, quite carefully read, but multiple times!
FN has no major defects. It does have an accumulation of minor defects, small creases, corner knocks or spine damage. But no major faults.

VERY GOOD [vg, from + to -] (54-35%)
Despite its name, vg is not very good at all. It is an average used comic book, and the lowest level for most collectors.
VG has moderate wear, cover creasing or spine roll. Perhaps some fading and discolouration of interior pages. It has no pieces out, except possibly a small cover edge, though crosswords, puzzles or coupons may have been completed. Centre pages may be detached or covers loose from a single staple. Minor tape repair may be present.

GOOD [g] (34-15%)
Complete, except for small pieces missing, usually around staples or edges. For reading (even in the bath!) and gap filling until a better grade copy comes along.
G copies will be badly creased, but readable and complete. Pages should not be brittle, but will have lost their suppleness and usually be off-colour.

FAIR [FR or F] (14-5%)
Another contradictory grade. Unfair would describe it better.
FR copies will be very badly damaged. No interior pages missing, but cover will have a soiled or well-scuffed cover with spine badly torn and rolled. Chunks may be missing from cover. Ageing on older titles is to be expected, with interior paper browning as it approaches brittleness. Not a copy for your collection.

POOR [P or PR] (4-1%)
Few dealers would list poor copies unless they are curiosity items.
PR copies can have glue, brown tape, stains, severe tears, extra staples, and chunks missing (normally detailed by vendor). For interest's sake only.

For further information on grading, readers are recommended to refer to the Avon published American annual **Overstreet Comicbook Price Guide** (currently in its 25th year), available from most comics shops in hardback or paperback editions.

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REVIEWS

*It is the intention of **Comics International** to help comics readers keep abreast of the entire range of titles currently available through direct sale specialist shops, good newsagents and mail order companies. Few retailers allow titles in stock to be read before choosing purchases; **Comics International**'s reviews are designed to counter this and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section should be of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a new title after purchase.*

***Review codes:** General competitive performance of a title is measured on a scale of **1** to **10**. A specific issue's quality, as measured against previous issues: <- - -> to <+ + +>.*

*Two ratings are used for the sake of detailed and fair coverage. The number following each review (on a scale of 1 to 10) is a quality comparison with similar titles currently being published. We make no attempt to compare **Bone** to **X-Men**, but review each within the context of its own genre.*

The individual issue is also rated within the confines of its previous issues. Hence a comparatively dull title may get a low number but a high rating for the specific issue reviewed (ranging from <-> to <+ + +> if there has been a notable improvement.

Reviews Editor: Sarah Bolesworth
Reviewing panel: Fabio P Barbieri (FPB), James Gibbs (JG), Rol Hirst (RH), Peter Phillips (PCP), Ian Salmon (IRS)

DARK HORSE

Sin City: Lost, Lonely & Lethal

by Miller

Frank Miller's dark world works better when readers are given time to build an emotional link with the central characters. A few pages isn't really enough to achieve that, and all that can really be derived from this are odd moments — a chuckle at the pontificating hitmen, a twinge of sorrow for the doomed lover of deadly Blue Eyes. Roll on the next multi-parter. (RH) **6**

DC COMICS

Azrael Plus 1

by O'Neil & Giarrano

Wandering Vic (The Question) Sage is hired to protect an actress aboard a riverboat from some inept terrorists, and in the course of the mission he hooks up with Azrael. But both script and art sink in the all too muddy waters. (PCP) **2**

Aztek the Ultimate Man 7

by Morrison & Millar + Harris + Champagne

<+> Aztek teams up with Batman in an attempt to out-think the Joker. The continuing bland nature of the artwork weakens the storytelling somewhat, ensuring that this title never quite fulfils its promise, but somebody here writes a *great* Batman. (IRS) **8**

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 91

by Ennis & Simpson

<-> A rather lazy effort from Garth Ennis — this tale of drug dealers, rogue PIs and a kitsch hippy villain reads too much like Tarantino-Lite. For once, the tough-guy humour Ennis has perfected in **Hitman** seems slightly forced. Will Simpson puts on a surprisingly good show, though with a very Neal Adams-style Batman. (RH) **6**

Batman: The Long Halloween 3

by Loeb & Sale

<+> The Joker takes centre stage as he seeks to discover the identity of the mysterious **Holiday** killer. Pure quality. (PCP) **9**

The Book of Fate 1

by Giffen & Wagner + Reinhold

To stand a chance of surviving in today's turbulent market a new comic really has to be out of the ordinary. There have been many enjoyable, thought-provoking and even classic Dr Fate stories over the years, yet the character has never been "hot". This latest version offers little new, being merely a rehash of the last, poorly-received incarnation. In an ideal world, given time, it might blossom into an entertaining series. But in cold reality? Cancelled in six months. (RH) **4**

Books of Magic 32

by Rieber & Snejberg; Vertigo

<+> Last issue's metaphysical theme continues, but to far greater effect. Tim confronts his own weaknesses and takes a decision a little too late, thus becoming the subject of one giant cosmic joke. A wonderful tale about the fragility of relationships, with its fine artwork accompanying an insightful script. (IRS) **9**

Books of Magic 33

by Rieber & Snejberg; Vertigo

<-> Tim encounters an Indian spirit who teaches him something about his "snake inside". John Ney Rieber puts the young magician through another learning experience. The denouement is a little too pat, but the tale as a whole has some nice thoughts on bravery, racism and the history of America. (IRS) **7**

Challengers of the Unknown 1

by Grant + Kaminksi & Leon + Martinbrough

Read **DC Does the X Files**. A completely new team of Challengers steps in to investigate the uncharted areas of the DC Universe the metahumans miss. Unfortunately, the setting may work against this book — residents of the DCU already accept aliens, vampires, lost races, etc, as commonplace, so just how much of the unknown is left that can provoke a reaction? This is well-produced, has a solid script and moodily-coloured art, but whether the X-philes will jump on board remains to be seen. (RH) **7**

Strange disappearances in a Wyoming backwater township attract the attention of the Challengers in this new series' debut. The team (replacing the past sell-by date Jack Kirby creations) are presented without the benefit of an origin story or motive, giving a who-cares feel to the narrative. Routine and predictable stuff. **3**

DC Universe Holiday Bash 1

various creators

An anthology of short stories extolling the spirit of Christmas. It's a hit and miss affair in which the New Gods segment (Simonson & Buscema) captures the best fantasy feel with its quasi-tribute to *Miracle on 34th Street*. Best to read on Christmas Eve. (PCP) **7**

Flash 122

by Waid & Augustyn & Ryan + Nyberg

<-> Wally is turfed out of Keystone but finds a new home in California in this rather pedantic tale, slowed down yet further by Paul Ryan's torpid artwork. Such an energetic character deserves a far more lively illustrator. (RH) **6**

Green Lantern/ Flash: Faster Friends 1

by Marz & various creators

An alien, captured by the Golden Age Flash and Green Lantern (in a previously untold adventure) and held by government forces for decades, escapes and sets in motion a plan to destroy the planet. This action-packed science fiction yarn teams Golden Age and modern day counterparts — and holds the reader's attention all the way through. (PCP) **6**

Hellblazer 110

by Jenkins & Phillips; Vertigo

<+ -> Things are going really well for John, so you know it's all about to fall apart. Britain is dying, and Constantine is probably more at fault than he realises. Not everything is entirely clear about the opening episode of the new five-part story, but this writer usually pulls it all together, given the chance. (RH) **8**

Hitman 10

by Ennis & McCrea

<+ +> The vitality that was missing last month returns in a big way as Monaghan makes his escape from the massed forces of the law. John McCrea's art benefits from the faster pace, while Garth Ennis's script sparkles throughout, especially in the Hitman's reaction to his latest guest — one of particular joy. (IRS) **8**

Hitman 11

by Ennis & McCrea

<+> The new Green Lantern proves himself to be extremely green when teamed up with street-sassy Tommy Monaghan. Garth Ennis is at his best in this title when poking fun at the superhero world that Monaghan inhabits, and John McCrea's art has the necessary touch of the absurd, too. Watch out for Gill Anderson's uncredited cameo. (RH) **8**

Impulse 22

by Diaz & Rousseau + Faucher

<- -> A book that is rapidly sinking under the weight of all its fill-in issues — and here's another one. Comics as sitcoms is fine, but this is starting to seem pointless, not to mention contrived. If the regular creators can't be bothered, why should the readers? (RH) **4**

Invisibles 2: 1

by Morrison & Jiminez + Stokes; Vertigo

<+> Now, the coolest comic on the stands *looks* as good as it always read. Obviously eager to attract the necessary new readers, Grant Morrison adds scads of sex and violence to this opening episode, but the script remains as biting and intelligently subversive as ever. The art, from Brian Bolland's top cover to the Perez-esque interiors, looks a million dollars. This deserves to be massive. (RH) **9**

Justice League America 2

by Morrison & Porter + Dell

<+ -> One by one, Justice League America's members are wiped out by alien superhumans in a strictly formulaic plot, down to the old-fashioned pairing off of members in separate chapters. This is lifted, however, by another strong script and art that, while still stiff, is beautifully coloured. (RH) **7**

<+> In the manner of classic **Justice League America** stories, the team splits up to battle the Hyperclan, with the initial forays going *very* badly ... The art team is not bad as such, but seems less than the title deserves, particularly with Grant Morrison's sterling work — his understanding of these legendary characters makes this a joy to read, if not to look at. (IRS) **8**

Preacher 22

by Ennis & Dillon

<+ -> The *Crusaders* storyline seems to have been building for a long time now — perhaps because it follows on so closely from the last multi-parter — but now all the characters are in place, we can only marvel at the layers of intrigue Garth Ennis has created here. So much seems to be happening at once, and there's still two episodes to go. (RH) **9**

<+ +> The slapstick subsides and true menace rears its head once again. The Allfather demonstrates his power, something nasty wakes in Cell 99 and the Saint of Killers is back. Everything that makes this the best on the market is visible on the page again. (IRS) **9**

The Question Returns

by O'Neil & Barreto

It has to be said: Denny O'Neil has lost it. Time was when he was one of the most innovative writers in comics, and the original **Question** series was testimony to that. Not here.

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When it comes to plot or character, there's more excitement in the Question's mask — and that's without mentioning any of the cringe-inducing cliches scattered along the way. The Question ... is why? (RH) **3**

Sandman Mystery Theatre 47

by Wagner + Seagle & Smith + Case; Vertigo

<+> Dian Belmont steps into the sidekick role as Wesley continues his attempt to save Janos Prohaska's reputation. Once more the period atmosphere is flawless — if only they could retell the entire Golden Age in such a sharp and entertaining fashion. (RH) **8**

Spectre 50

by Ostrander & Mandrake

<+> The Spectre faces an old **Shade the Changing Man** foe, the American Scream, in a nice bit of DC/Vertigo continuity as the *Haunting of America* storyline concludes. Some readers may find the Mom's Apple Pie a bit hard to swallow, but perhaps that's just a cynical Brit viewpoint. (RH) **7**

Starman 27

by Robinson & Yeowell + Von Grawbadger

<-> Jack helps a homeless Santa in a typically cloying Christmas tale which occasionally manages to free itself of the restrictions of its genre and be both amusing (in the dialogue at the O'Dares') and touching (the end owes much to Capra). Steve Yeowell obviously enjoys festive tales, having drawn one for Batman last year... (RH) **7**

<+ +> An old-fashioned Christmas issue, complete with distressed Santa Claus. The script is touching, if a little obvious, the art feels suitably warm and welcoming, and suddenly the supporting cast seems familiar. A major improvement. (IRS) **8**

Thrillkiller 2

by Chaykin

City cop Bruce Wayne continues his hunt for the vigilante duo, Batgirl and Robin, in what is Chaykin's best script in years. Even so, the novelty of *Elseworlds* stories is inevitably wearing thin as the well of variables runs dry. (PCP) **7**

IMAGE COMICS

Astro City 3

by Busiek & Anderson + Blyberg; Homage

<+ -> There's a new girl at Bolling Elementary School named Astrid Lijnders: she is nine years old, fair-haired and doesn't know how to play hopscotch. So the class bully decides to pick on her ... A perfect, unforced conclusion to the two-part Astra story, with fine artwork. (FPB) **9**

Bone 26

by Smith; Cartoon Books

<+ -> Everybody is taking things out of Barrelhaven: Bone and Smiley are sneaking out the rat-creature cub, a mysterious group of men have Thorn's sword, and Phoney is slipping off with all the town's wealth. **Bone**'s high-quality act continues. (FPB) **10**

Gen13 Bootleg 1: Liquist's Fault

by Farmer & Davis w/Farmer; Wildstorm

<-> Disappointment of the month is this feebly-written and (by their standards) unimpressively drawn Image debut for Alan Davis and Mark Farmer. Farmer did the writing, coming across as watered-down Davis — Caitlin is notably ill-described. Give Davis his own series, now, and we might see something different. (FPB) **6**

Leave it to Chance 3

by Robinson & P Smith; Homage

<-> The two sides of the *Devil's Echo* struggle have been played against each other by a third party intent on destroying the city. It would be better if we hadn't already guessed the true villain's identity, and the art seems to be more cartoony. Still a fine comic, though. (FPB) **7**

Shattered Image 4

by Busiek + B Kesel & Daniel + Conrad + Irwin

<-> Welcome back, Tony Daniel. Or rather, not welcome at all. Wasn't it enough for this butcher to fillet the first issue? Why give him the fourth as well? Image has many other, better artists — and few worse. Never mind, Kurt Busiek and Barbara Kesel are having fun, and making the odd serious point in the process. (FPB) **6**

MARVEL COMICS

Amazing Spider-Man 420

by DeFalco & Skroce + LaRosa

<+ -> A change from the standard hero line-up as Spider-Man and X-Man meet and end up sharing a Christmas meal. Tom DeFalco throws a curve into the plot as two supervillains tear up the city trying to kill each other, but thankfully Pete and Nate don't even know what's going on. (RH) **7**

Daredevil/Shi: Blind Faith

by Golden + Gutierrez + Tucci & Igle + Williamson

While not having read any of his **Shi** stories, Bill Tucci's reputation alone was enough to make me buy this title. But the average artwork (which sometimes disappears off the edge of the page) and a consistently pretentious script make it a real disappointment. (JG) **4**

Daredevil 360

by Kesel & Nord + Ryan

<- -> Daredevil pits himself against the Absorbing Man in one of the most illogical fight scenes ever. Kesel is making a big deal of the fact that Daredevil no longer has the Avengers or the Fantastic Four to back him — somewhat futile, as they've rarely been seen in this title anyway. (JG) **5**

Daredevil 361

by Kesel & Nord + Ryan

<+> The last leader the Avengers had, the Black Widow now sees herself as a real widow, and is going after *every villain who ever fought the Avengers*. Daredevil knows this would be suicide, and tries to dissuade her. A good theme, but not brilliantly handled. (JG) **6**

Peter Parker: Spider-Man 77

by Mackie & Castillini + various

<- -> John Romita Jr is conspicuous by his absence, which makes the weakness in Howard Mackie's storytelling abilities all too visible. Spider-Man ties to stop Morbius sucking blood, but ends up as dinner himself. The fill-in art has a rather odd, Seventies feel reminiscent in part of Ross Andru but without any of his style. (RH) **5**

Sensational Spider-Man 13

by DeZago & Wieringo + Case

Mike Wieringo was born to draw Spider-Man and his return helps push this book to new heights. The webhead jets off to the Savage Land to help Ka-Zar clean up what they think are the

effects of global warming — but which turns out to be the byproduct of an evil corporation's work. (RH) **8**

Silver Surfer/ Superman

by Perez & Lim + Austin

Unreadable nonsense as Superman and pain-in-the-butt Silver Surfer are plagued by the Impossible Man and Mr Mxyzptlk. A high-priced ($5.95) package destined for cut-price dealer boxes. (PCP) **0**

Spectacular Spider-Man 242

by DeMatteis & Ross

<+ -> Marc DeMatteis returns to what he does best on the Spider-Man titles — examining the psychology of the classic villains. This time, it's the turn of the Chameleon, a man struggling to find his true identity after years of lies and disguise. Luke Ross's pencils show promise, but could benefit from a reduction in the number of McFarlane-isms. (RH) **8**

Spider-Man: The Osborn Journal

by Greenberg & Hotz + various

A valiant attempt to make some kind of sense out of the ridiculous clone sage which falls apart on closer examination. But it's amusing to remember how Marvel dug itself deeper and deeper with one shock revelation following another. In the end, though, it's nonsense, best forgotten, although the art here has a good quirky-spooky edge. (RH) **4**

Ultra Girl 1

by B Kesel & Kirk + Almond

Ultra Girl is the best new Marvel character since goodness knows when, and the story is brilliantly conceived and well-written. So why worry? Because a good new Marvel series is like a lovely day — now watch some bastard come along and f*** it up. (FPB) **8**

US INDEPENDENTS

Cell 2

by Kirk; Antarctic

A girl takes a mugging victim to her flat and regrets it for the rest of the week. Everything about this issue is of exceptional quality: skilful artwork serving the tight telling of the really intriguing story about sympathetic characters and their well-observed relationships. Derek Kirk is a major new cartoonist, without a doubt. (FPB) **9**

Cerebus 213

by Sim & Gerhard; Aardvark Vanaheim

<+> The arrival of Bear's partner, Zig, throws the macho atmosphere of the tavern into disarray as Dave Sim's examination of male-female relationships continues along its potentially controversial path. Interestingly, the presence of a woman seems to speed the action up here — more happens in this issue than for months. (RH) **8**

Crypt of Dawn 1

by Linsner & Horan + Tenuta + Fillbach + Fillbach; Sirius

Sometimes Linsner's mannerisms and affectations are provoking; indeed, the second story in this anthology title is near-pornographic. But the first — a vampire story with a curious inner sadness — is very affecting; and the third — about love — is almost a masterpiece. (FPB) **8**

Doris Nelson, Atomic Housewife

by Jones & Anderson; Jake

This concept, a superhero-based satire of Fifties' TV shows, is devoid of creativity. There is something gutless about satirising fashions 40 years out of date, and the irrelevant superhero angle along with the dull superhero art proves the authors incapable of new ideas. (FPB) **3**

The Hoon 1

by Bihun & Brymon; Caliber

<+ +> It may be the few months' hiatus, but suddenly the Hoon is back to his best. Here he is abducted by aliens who look like ET but *must* be villains (they are addicted to talk shows). (FPB) **8**

The Hy-breed 7

by Simpson & Simpson; Division

An evil corporation is using some very sinister agents to track down a couple of escaped scientists who created a number of animal-human "Hy-breeds". A clever, unexpected reworking of superhero themes with an intermittent but attractive sense of humour. (FPB) **6**

Mercedes 10

by Friedland & Fuhst; Angus

<+> An excellent conclusion to the vampire story — though in a sense, it concludes nothing. The worst of the vampires, Pilar, is

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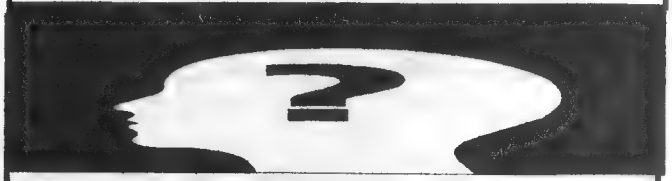

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still free and threatening. Simon is dead, with an iron spike through his heart (a gift from Mercedes), Luis is no more and Mercedes, John and Chloe simply want out. (FPB) **9**

Mr Nightmare's Wonderful World 1

by Ulanski; Moonstone

An attempt to tell a peculiar kind of children's story (the spirit who keeps nightmares jailed) that founders on the author's inability to write. The art is quite good, but not enough to make up for the feckless, pointless story. (FPB) **5**

Mythography 1

various creators; Bardic

Surely anthology titles don't come any better. The cast list is a drum-roll of indie celebrity: Teri Wood, Jimmie **Cyberzone** Robinson, Andrew Pepoy, Jimmy Gownley, Michael Cohen — and, probably best of all, Carla McNeill; why is she pencilling **Shanda the Panda** for someone else when she can write like this? (FPB) **9**

Nowhere 1

by Drechsler; Drawn & Quarterly

It's debatable whether this comic was worth doing at all — strange, because the story, a rites-of-passage account of a teenage girl moving to a new neighbourhood and meeting a boy, is pretty good. It is the abidingly unsympathetic storytelling, not the material, that is at fault. (FPB) **7**

Reality Check! 2

by Rikki & Wolfgarth; Sirius

Once again Catreece proves considerably cleverer than Colin, whose sailing trip and virtual reality beach holiday quickly turn into a humorous disaster. If you could distil pure fun with no secondary intentions, this comic is the form that it would take. (FPB) **8**

The Redd 1

by Tangpuz; Passline

The trouble with this study of a young man's inner experiences is that it expects the reader to be familiar with the inside of the author's head. But the art and storytelling show great skill and control, and one feels that the strangely named Juniper Albert Tangpuz has the potential for great things. (FPB) **7**

Rib 1

by Ford & Kelleher; Bookmark

In a world in which intelligent worms live as a despised minority, an orphan worm named Rib goes in search of his past and finds *nice* humans and *unpleasant* radical worms. Well-conceived and drawn, this offbeat comic has all the signs of being carefully thought-out, and it might just develop into something superlative. (FPB) **7**

Skeleton Key 16

by Watson; Amaze Ink

Tamsin's tragic transformation into a pincushion continues, but at least she and Kitsune are able to get rid of the Chinese vampires by means of rice-ball ice picks. Ever felt completely confused? (FPB) **7**

Stonewall in the Shenandoah

by Krash & Van Sant

What are billiant, victorious military campaigns like? Ask anyone who was in one, and they'll tell you they're mostly trudge and slog. In this fine account of one of history's most billiant campaigns, you can practically feel the soldiers' blisters and backache. (FPB) **8**

Stray Bullets 11

by Lapham; El Capitan

<+> Beth drags Nina to a picnic, but Nina is slowly coking herself out of her mind and, watching her, Beth finds herself growing more adult and more worried. So when she meets a really nice-looking boy, she remembers she has a boyfriend and tries to pass him to Beth — but it's already too late for her... (FPB) **9**

Wandering Star 17

by Wood; Sirius

<+> Catastrophes always burst in unannounced, in the middle of the most mundane, even pleasant, activities. This issue is one of the most tremendous climaxes ever seen in comics, and the delayed response — typical of Teri Sue Wood's methods — only makes it more powerful. A shattering, tragic storyline. (FPB) **10**

Wolff & Byrd, Counsellors of the Macabre

by Lash; Exhibit A

What happens when you try to prosecute a law suit at 1300 hours on Friday 13th? Well, your client gets nobbled, your opponent is in bed with the press, your car is nearly run down by a truck, your lover marries someone else — and your stubborn law partner *still* will not hear of jinxes. Fun. (FPB) **7**

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■ **MARVEL COMICS (UK)**, Panini House, Coach & Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent KT2 5UJ (humour, adventure, licensed) 01892 500 100

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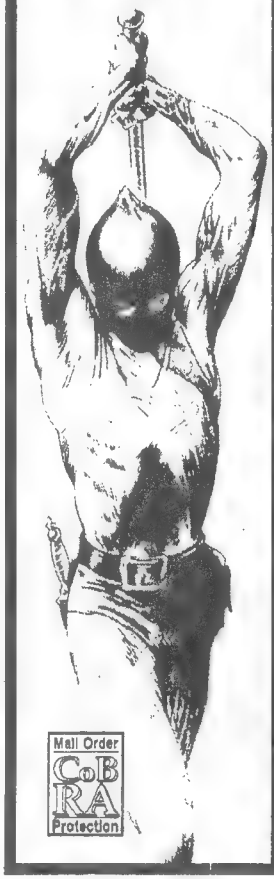

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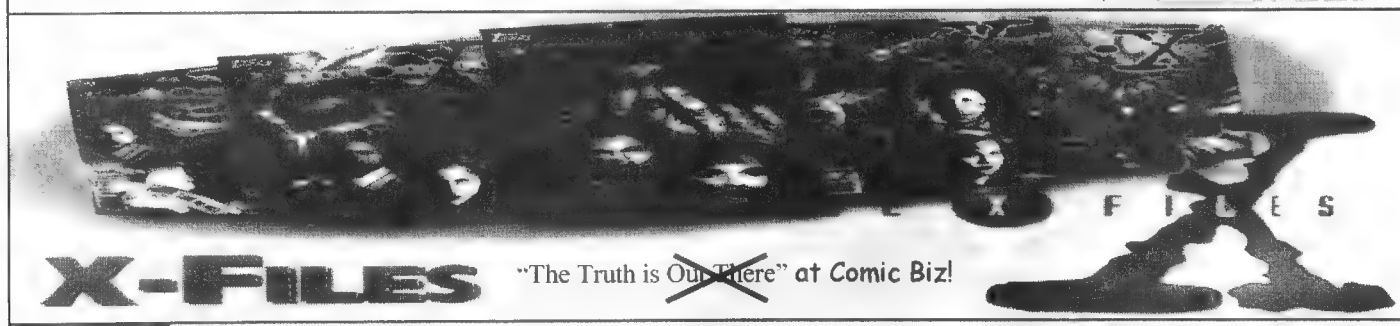

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It's Supersham

IS IT a bird? A plane? No, it's the latest plan by DC Comics to boost the flagging fortunes of its superhero icon Superman.

After all, once you kill him off (he did get better), what other heights can you scale to grab the imagination of the readers.

We've had four imitation supermen; a depowered Superman and a Superman wedding, all in the last three years. But nothing, it seems, has been able to return the Man of Steel to the position of market leader which he had held during his boom years.

So now we have a new Superman. One with different powers, a different costume and a different philosophy. What's more, we now have a vulnerable Clark Kent. The mild mannered reporter has become just that, as he no longer has super powers in his human form!

But how long will it last?

Presumably just long enough to enable Lois to fall pregnant. After all, any attempt a super-powered Kryptonian may make to consumate a marriage is likely to result in Lois not surviving, and, as Larry Niven so eloquently stated in his classic *Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex* short story, there would be millions of unstoppable super-sperm chaotically racing through buildings, mountains *and* humans in a bid to find eggs to fertilise... for a full 72 hours.

So a depowered Clark can at least give the fans something they've always thought unlikely — Superbaby!

As always, the news media has swallowed the bait wholesale and given the Man of Steel a massive free publicity campaign; so DC should be applauded for doing their bit to counter the only other comics news story in the national press... Marvel's bankruptcy!

But will this latest media-blitz boost sales for a third time? If so, it's guaranteed we'll be seeing the Supertot story within, say, nine months!

But is it another example of the illusion of progress? Now the (thankfully) short-haired Superman is married, children have to follow both for TV and comics, but who's taking the lead here?

If the unlikely answer is comics dictate to TV, then that means we're going to see some confused viewers if the Man of Energy (sorry, guys, it just doesn't sound right!) dons his sky-blue and white outfit for *Lois & Clark*, plus *Superman, the Animated Series* and the movie planned.

Somehow that doesn't seem likely. Outside of the MacDonald's golden "M" symbol, Superman's shield-like "S" is probably the most recognisable single initial motif in the world.

And with the income from comics publishing now taking a back seat to licensing revenue, the DC sales team will have its work cut out explaining to playsuit, wallpaper and T-shirt licensees that the comics won't be featuring the symbol they've just paid a huge royalty advance to feature. It brings to mind the furore over Superman's death in the comics, with it taking place immediately after a leading company had just licensed the character to promote its long-life batteries.

Call us cynics, but we're confident enough to go in print saying we expect this to be another Spider-Man black costume scenario. Give it a year and things will revert to the norm. Otherwise, when progress and real-time is taken seriously in major comics titles, heroes grow old, and you end up with the mess the Justice Society got into. Nobody wants to read about 60-year old superheroes. Not too much audience identification there, guys!

Nevertheless, nice one, DC. You got an upbeat comics story into the mainstream media (again). If the illusion of progress is what it takes to sucker the outside world, fair enough. It's a damn sight better publicity than your competition's getting right now!

Changes on the way?

MIKE Carlin, the former Superman family supremo, admitted to an ITMite at UKCAC last year that many of the stalwart Superman fans found a lot of the creators difficult to accept:

Jon Bogdanove (on **Man of Steel**), Stuart Immonen (on **Adventures of Superman**) and Keiron Dwyer (on **Action Comics**) are not held in particularly high regard by fans. Equally, Louise Simonson (on

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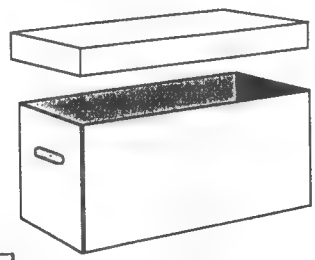

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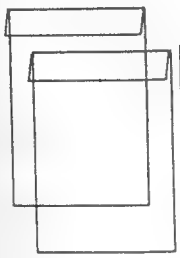

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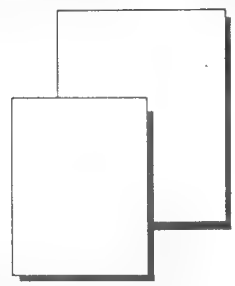

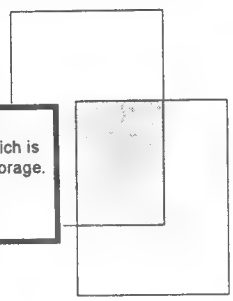

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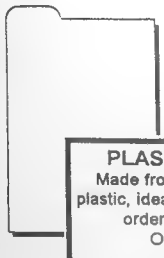

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Man of Steel) and **Action**'s David Michelinie are not the fans' ideal choice of writers.

This wouldn't have mattered in the old newsstand days, comics were read for the creations more than the (often anonymous) creators, but that was then, this is now.

Rumour has it that originally the changes to Superman were to involve a change in creative teams and direction. Current family editor Joey Cavalieri wanted to dump everyone except Roger Stern, Dan Jurgens and Karl Kesel and attract new hot artists and writers to produce the Man of Steel's adventures into the new millennium.

But his plans were said to have been vetoed by Carlin, who asked him to do something drastic with the titles before doing anything he might regret with the creative teams. Cavalieri agreed, but with a proviso; if this failed, he would get to do what he wanted with the titles or he would walk.

Possibly the main problem here is that Superman has fallen into the same trap as Tarzan and Sherlock Holmes. They're all household names, but they're equally such overplayed old-hat that they've lost their edge and are seen as boring outdated concepts to the youth of today.

A problem for some people in the industry, but let's hope it's seen as a challenge to others!

Amalgam '97

MOVERS has received a list of this year's 12 Amalgam titles to be produced by Marvel and DC. Repeating last year's approach, six will be published by each company. No info on how the two companies superhero universes will become merged this time, but it is believed to be Marvel's responsibility to come up with a catalyst this time out...

DC has just finished **All Access**, its first post-Amalgam Comics crossover, and in late spring Marvel will have its turn to do a four-issue series utilising both universes.

This will be followed by the major Summer event as Amalgam II kicks off. The 12 titles are roughed in as follows with the proposed creative teams detailed in brackets (W = writer; P = penciller; I = inker):

- **Challengers of the Fantastic** (W: Karl Kesel, P: Tom Grummett, I: Al Vey)
- **Exciting X-Patrol**
- **Iron Lantern** (W: Kurt Busiek, P & I: Paul Smith)
- **Magneto and the Magnetic Men** (W: Tom Peyer, P: Barry Kitson, I: Ray McCarthy)
- **Spider-Boy Team-Up** (W: Karl Kesel & Roger Stern, P & I: Mike Wieringo)
- **Thorion of the New Asgods** (W: Keith Giffen, P: John

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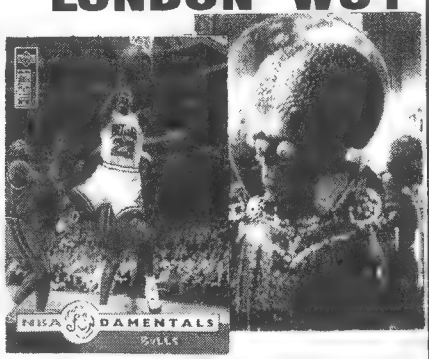

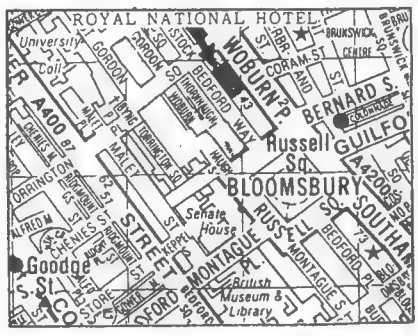

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FUTURE NATIONAL DATES
6TH APRIL, 1ST JUNE,
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Romita Jr, I: Klaus Janson)

- **Bat-Thing** *(W: Chuck Dixon, P: Kelley Jones)*
- **Dark Claw Adventures** *(W & P: Paul Dini)*
- **Gen Hex** *(W: Scott Lobdell, P: Tim Truman)*
- **JLX Unleashed** *(W: Mark Waid & Brian Augustyn, P: Howard Porter)*
- **Lobo The Duck** (W: Alan Grant, P: Val Semeiks)
- **Super Soldier Man O'War** *(W & P: Dave Gibbons)*

The unconfirmed creative teams above are shown in italics for these new cross-company capers set to start in July. DC's Mike Carlin and Marvel's Bob Harras are overseeing the team-ups.

While there's time, if any of our readers feel inspired (or amused) enough to submit their suggested amalgamated DC-Marvel characters, we'll print the best here next month.

Bone alone again

JEFF Smith's cult favourite comic book **Bone** has just left Image after 18 months with the California-based publisher.

The split has been reported in the US trade press as being a very amicable parting, with both sides happy to have had such a good relationship.

Smith was pleased that **Bone** received a lot more attention and improved sales duing a rocky distribution period. Image was very happy to be associated with such a highly regarded independent comic. So why has Smith left Image to return his funny animal book to the realms of self-publishing again?

Apparently because the relationship proved more lucrative for Image than it did for Smith!

Bone's sales initially increased by about 15% on the switch. But once Image's handling charges, overheads, publicity and advertising were factored in — and by the time **Bone** had been at the imprint for 12 months, Smith was actually making less money than he was when the comic was being produced by his own Cartoon Books.

In fact, the only thing that Smith was making more money from was the Image *Encore Presentation* reprints, these being reprinted earlier issues (of which there were umpteen Cartoon Books printings) with new covers.

Bone returns to Cartoon Books with issue #28 while the **Bone** reprint series stays at Image. Image saves face and Jeff Smith discovers whether the downsizing of the US market was a factor in Image not selling the quantities he had hoped for!

Worst possible taste

IT SEEMS that London Night Studios' Everette Hartsoe is facing a court action from the relatives of United Nations workers who fell victim to the deadly Ebola virus in Zaire during 1995.

Hartsoe's company has been advertising a new T-shirt design featuring a zombie with the words "Ebola — Zaire" blazoned across the front. The relatives of the dead and the few survivors of the outbreak which killed hundreds of Zairians and 11 UN aid workers have been consulting lawyers in New York and writs are expected to be issued by the end of January.

A new Defenders?

A NEW Marvel team book entitled **Power Corps** is set to debut in July.

Written by Roger (**Spider-Man**) Stern and drawn by Pascual (**Wolverine**) Ferry, the new group of heroes consists of: Jim Hammond (the original Human Torch, but now depowered) as the team leader with Luke Cage, Power Man, Iron Fist, White Tiger (a new female version), and... The Hulk!? Read on...

Exit stage right?

DESPITE assurances to the contrary from Marvel, there is a growing rumour that Peter David is considering leaving **The Hulk**.

Fierce criticism of his recent work on ol' Greenskin, coupled with excellent response to his two DC series, **Aquaman** and **Supergirl**, have prompted the predictions.

Allegedly, the rumours started when David said he was not very happy about the Hulk being used in the new **Power Corps** series without Stern consulting him. Peter David was unavailable for comment.

Out of the picture

A RUMOUR that has surfaced very recently from our Image ITMite is that Rob Liefeld may well *not* be seeing his 12 months out on his *Heroes Reborn* titles, despite assurances from Marvel editor Tom Brevoort.

Sales on Liefeld's two books have plummeted since the initial launch and Marvel is said to have approached Jim Lee's Wildstorm Productions and asked if they would like to handle all four of the titles for the remaining six months of the contract.

Rumour has it that Travis Charest and an unknown (as yet) writer are to replace Rob Liefeld on **Captain America** and artists Trevor Scott and Sal Regla are to replace Chap Yaep and Jonathan Sibal on **The Avengers**.

...But as our Marvel ITMite was a casualty in the last spate of redundancies, we're unable to get any kind of confirmation or denial on this!

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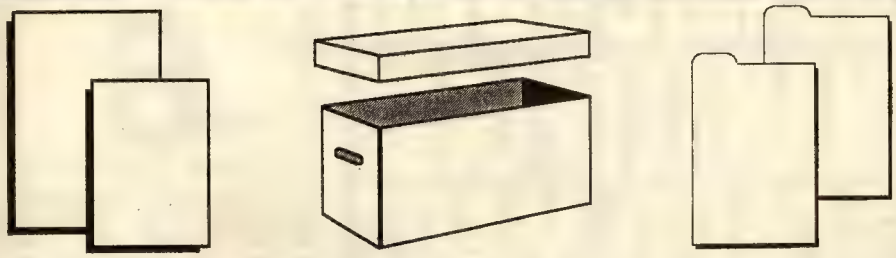

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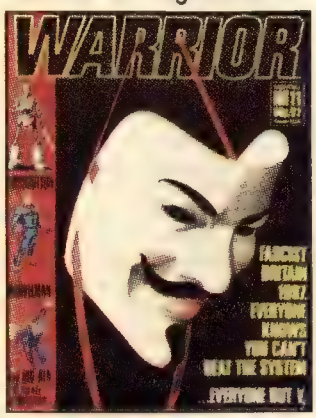

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#3 (Logan's Run, CE3K, Quark, Harrison Ford interview, Trek, *no strips*) **3.50**
#4 (First Marvel issue: Hulk tv feature, Tolkien, Excaliber, War of Worlds, *no strips*) **5.00**
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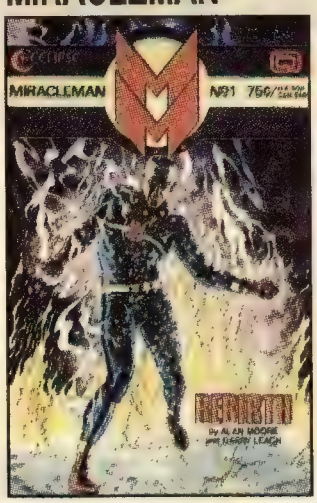

Repackaged by Quality Communications as a full colour 32 page comicbook for US publishers Eclipse, **Miracleman** reprinted the award-winning *Marvelman* **Warrior** work of Alan Moore, Garry Leach and Alan Davis for American comic fans.

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In addition to **Brian Bolland's Black Book** and the **John Bolton's Halls of Horror** mini-series (now out of print), Quality also packaged for Eclipse the **Axel Pressbutton** 6-issue full-colour comic, featuring the work of Pedro Henry, Steve Dillon, Brian Bolland, Alan Davis, Mick Austin and Cam Kennedy.

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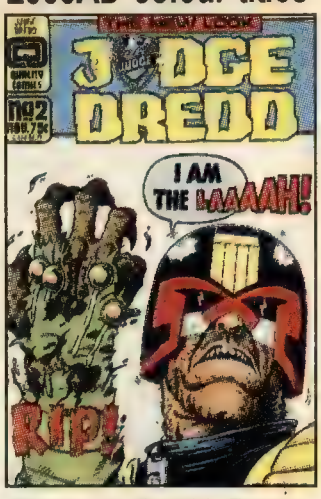

Prior to the DC series and the Fleetway reprints, Quality produced a range of US sized colour comics in the mid-1980s including the **2000AD** work of Wagner, Grant, Mills, Bolland, Dillon, Gibbons, Moore, Davis, O'Neill, Talbot, and McMahon. The following are still available:

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Comics International Letters, 8 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ

Marvel's circle game

Chris Ash, 34 Newbridge Close, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex

HAS anyone noticed how the fortunes of Marvel Comics have become predictably cyclical? At the beginning of the Fifties, Seventies and Nineties, it was horribly bloated, only to find itself on the verge of collapse in the middle of those decades.

Its period of greatest success was the 1960s — the only time it's ever been forced to concentrate on quality rather than quantity.

Re: reviews

Fabio P. Barbieri, 33 Brewster Rd, Leyton, London E10 6RG

PHIL Hall is probably right (*Reviews*, **CI** #75) about Alan Moore's first effort at prose writing: **Voice of the Fire**.

The great writer is certainly prone to fantastic errors of judgement (among which I, although not everybody else, include **Watchmen**).

But Phil is absolutely mistaken in thinking that a Kathy Acker blurb shows the publisher was uncommitted to the book. Rather, it shows the market that they are going for. Ms. Acker (who I think is a personal friend of Moore's) is a durable underground celebrity among the sort of people who think Jeannette Winterson is a bourgeois sell-out.

Personally, I loathe the woman; but you certainly can't say her name lacks prestige.

About long and short reviews, I have a suggestion. I thought the mix this issue (CI #75) was perfect: the usual rattle of hundreds of brief reviews, and then, four columns of closely-printed *Reviews Extra* on three books which, however you view them, were major.

Printed small, as you did this issue, we might get the best of both worlds: extensive coverage and in-depth analysis.

Page 45 digressions

Alan Jones, Church Road, Pool, Redrith, Cornwall

I'D like to thank the wonderful Page 45 in print for its sterling service. Steve, Mark and Dominique have opened my mind to some magnificent titles that I wouldn't have touched otherwise, and for this alone they deserve a medal. Comics are, after all, for reading and only by recommending and trusting friends can we find a comic that most suits us.

And another vote for Peter David's replacement. Peter's just too far off the subject of comics now. I know the column's called *Major Digressions*, but it's past the point of tedium. Is Arthur Ranson still interested?

Kicking the X-habit

Steven Morrell, 881 Barnsley Road, Sheffield S5 0QJ

I'M looking for help. At one point I read all the X-titles, now it's just **Excalibur**, **X-Men**, **Uncanny X-Men** and **X-Men Unlimited**.

The big question is "why?" Wolverine's gone feral, and lost his adamantium cutting edge. Havok's gone bad. Archangel's got his wings back, but they've lost their offensive capacity and Colossus's lost his faith and hope.

Some bastard shaved Nightcrawler. Forge's personality completely changed. Rogue ran away on a road trip. Phoenix (Rachel Summers) has disappeared. Psylocke's got a stupid mark on her face and Storm keeps getting younger and younger. What's going on?? The complete focus of the titles on Ken and Barbie (Scott and Jean) is really becoming sickening.

Why do I still keep buying them, when they're the last comics I read? This soap story's becoming tired — changes for change's sake is no change. We need character development. But will we get it? No way, this is Marvel Comics! And I'm stupid enough to pay £4.50 a month for something I don't need or read!

So, if anyone can give me a reason for dumping the X-Men, write to this column!

Holy bat-predictions!!

Marcus Sierusko, Rumour Control, Church Street, Manchester

AS WE celebrate another year

closer to the millenium, I thought your readers might like a taste of what an earlier generation thought we'd be up to round about now.

I recently purchased **Detective Comics** #395 and while giving such a vintage issue a deserved read, I noticed a letter written in 1969 to comment on the recent 30th anniversary of Batman's appearance. The writer speculated on what the Batman character would be like in the, then, far flung future of 1999!

Dear Editor: The recent 30th anniversary issue of **Detective** was a nicely interesting tribute to the Batman feature and it set me thinking. How different from today's Batman will the Batman of the year 1999 be, if the character lasts that long?

There is no one who can predict, with certainty, whether or not comics will be around at the turn of the century — the odds are rather evenly divided between *pro* (there will always be a need for a unique genre of light-semi-juvenile-entertainment-reading) and *con* (assuming our society makes it up to then, and assuming social-technological-educational processes continue developing at the same rate as the last 10 years, we may find that printed material has been replaced in popularity by the audio and visual, in which case both newspapers and comics will be up their respective creeks without the appropriate paddles).

So many things can happen in a measly three decades! Let's suppose comics survive, in one form or another. Will Batman survive, too?

The way things have been going, Batman and Superman will fizzle only when comics themselves fizzle. I may be sticking my neck out, but I have a hunch that Batgirl won't make it to 1999. Alfred, as a basic part of the legend, will; Commissioner Gordon will, too. Bruce Wayne will not be married and Robin will still be his ward.

I envision the villains as pretty much the same, depending on contemporary conditions. If the race problem is still warm, censorship may frown upon exaggerated physical attributes or "colour differences accentuated so as to incite derision or unhealthy amusement", and we may well find the Joker in a mask, instead of being actually dead white-skinned and green-haired. (Think that's a far-fetched prediction? Censors mean well — I have nothing against them — but they tend to unreasonable hysteria at times.) If tobacco is banned and relative shock-values remain the same, the Penguin may be without his cigarette-holder.

Story style and contents will change. One notices that fans today are very sticky about scientific detail and realism: that's because present day comic readers (the large majority) are of the first few generations born into the Age of Modern Technology, and realism is the fashion. I'll wager that by 1999, when I'm 49, comics will have swung full circle back to the uncaring unbelievability of the '30s and '40s; they'll have become purely escapist fantasies again. It'll be a lot easier to escape in them too. Scientists tell us wall-sized TV sets and home computer-linkages will be as common as radios by the 21st Century.

In that case, nobody would *read* comics; we'd *play* them, feeding them into the home entertainment system and watching them projected in a viewer, in three-dimensional colour, perhaps.

Lettercols would be in 3-D too — a collection of taped opinions sent in by fans, with Mike Friedrich's grandson or Irene Varonoff's granddaughter in loving colour! Some fun, eh? — *Rand B. Lee, Roxbury, Conn.*

Challengers Mark II

John Miller, 38 Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5PY

I'VE just read **CI** #76 over a couple of days and once again I find that **CI** is *the* place to find out what new comics are being published and what's going on in the world of comics.

For example, I've noticed a few items in recent issues, in *Hotshots* and elsewhere, about the new **Challengers of the Unknown** comic, the first issue of which appeared in my local comic shop a few days ago.

Due to sheer curiosity I was unable to leave it alone and forked out cash for this first issue. I have to admit to being quite fascinated by it, perhaps due to it being something of a novelty. I find it not a bad effort and I've added it to my standing order, which had dwindled away to nothing, but is now up to five comics.

This new **Challengers** comic has a sort of *X-Files* feel to it. Ah well, I expected some kind of '90s approach. Perhaps the comic's creators and its (younger) readers feel that the old Challengers team — Red, Ace, Prof and Rocky — belong more in the 1950s.

The visual style of this new **Challengers** comic is not a million miles away from that of DC's creepy/occult comics like **Hellstorm** and **The Spectre**. Editor D. K. Torsland refers to the comic as being part of the dark side of the DC Universe.

In *Letters* (**CI** #76), Milton Finesilver talks about the Silver Age period of **Green Lantern** just prior to the O'Neil/Adams/Schwartz issue #76 being a "rocky" period. But I've just read, as a special treat, 40 issues of **Green Lantern** from the '60s, including a good few from this "rocky" period and found some of these issues to be pretty OK, with some great issues featuring Star Sapphire and Sinestro.

A "rocky" period I'd agree, but I think there's some great stuff there, too. But I may as well own up to reading the current (Kyle Rayner) **Green Lantern** comic, the associate editor of which, Eddie Berganza, is always keen to point out that the current **GL** is a '90s comic and not a '60s one.

As always, thanks for another entertaining, interesting and informative issue.

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Winter sale, loads of bargains: 25% off all prices, which are already amongst the lowest around. SAE for 20-page catalogue of many thousands of back issues from all major companies, including indies, British and some Silver Age. Phone 0161 366 8226. Mike Cruden, 18 Backbower Lane, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 5NS.

Attention all comic lovers! Over 4,000 comics for sale from the '80s and '90s. Marvel, DC, Image, Valiant, Malibu and Dark Horse. Featuring **Superman**, **Batman**, **Spider-Man**, **Hulk**, **X-Men**, **Fantastic Four**, etc. Phone Victor on 0173 434 6351 Tuesdays or Thursdays.

For sale: hundreds of comics from private collection. Marvel, DC, indies (including that comic based on the weird yet incredibly successful TV show with X in the title!), from '60s-'90s. Stupid prices. SAE for list to: Rol Hirst, Rushgrove Farm, Holt Head, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield, W. Yorks HD7 5TY.

For sale: thousands of American comics (1960s to present). Large Silver Age selection all at real bargain prices, everything well below guide. Large choice of DC as well as Marvel and indies. Please send a large SAE for our 15 page list to A to Z Comics, 13 Biddulph Street, Leicester LE2 1BH. Mail order only, no callers please.

For sale: **Amazing Spider-Man**, **Avengers**, **Daredevil**, **Defenders**, **Fantastic Four**, **Ghost Rider**, **Hulk**, **Iron Man**, **Marvel Team-Up**, **Silver Surfer**, **Spectacular Spider-Man**, **Star Trek**, **Star Wars**, **Tales of Suspense**, **Tales to Astonish**, **Wolverine**, **Uncanny X-Men** and many more US Marvels including forgotten classics (**Captain Marvel**, **Killraven**, **Man-Thing**, **Master of Kung-Fu**) from the '60s to the '90s; British Marvels at clearance prices; high grade 1970s **Doctor Who TV Comic** run; high and low grades — accurately graded and sensibly priced, including 10p and 20p bargains. For full list send SAE to P. M. Jaques, 21 The Oaklands, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire, WR9 8AD. Mail order only. CoBRA member.

Private collection for sale: mainly DC comics (major titles), some from the 1960s. Also treasury editions, hardback collections, comics-related magazines, etc. Everything strictly graded. Please send SAE for revised list to Michael Connolly, 6 Cromwell Road, Belfast, N. Ireland, BT7 1JW. Mail order only, no callers please.

Even larger selection of comics for sale from the 1950s onwards: over 15,000 items available including 2500+ Silver Age comics as well as virtually all Bronze/Modern Age titles. In depth runs of **Amazing Spider-Man** from #6; **X-Men** from #3; **Fantastic Four** from #25; **Daredevil** from #1 and all other Marvel/DC Silver Age titles. As ever, all comics priced to sell — everything is well below guide and strictly graded. Plenty of high grade Silver on offer as well as "hot" items. Contact Andrew: 0171 431 7484 or write to A. Colman, 67 St. John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL for a free catalogue. Wants lists welcome. Also, pre 1970 collections wanted, high prices paid.

Wizard ½s for sale: Gold ½s — **Ripclaw**, **X-O Manowar**; Platinum ½s — **Avengelyne** and normal ½s — **Astro City**, **Bone** 13 ½, **Darkness**, **Doom's IV**, **Heroes Reborn**, **Lady Death**, **Lady Death: the Crucible**, **Lady Rawhide**, **Maxx**, **Witchblade** and **X-Files**; **Wizard Ace Edition** — **Ash**, **Strangers in Paradise**, **Madman**, **Megaton**. Trading cards: *Spawn*, *Spawn Chromium*, *X-Men* I & II (both Tin Box sets), *Amalgam*, *DC Legends*, *Pitt*, *Gen 13* I & II, *DV8*, *Witchblade*, *WildC.A.T.s.*, *Wetworks*, *Spider-Man*. CCGs: *Wildstorm* — all boxes, *Star Wars* — all boxes. Comics: **Spawn** 1-20, **Angela** 1-3 + special, **Ash** 1-5, **Gen 13** (mini) 1-5, 5a, regular 1 onwards, **Witchblade**, **Darkness**, **Darkchylde**, **X-Men**, **Uncanny X-Men**, **Wolverine**, **Generation X**, **X-Factor**, **Spider-Man**, **Amazing**, **Spectacular**, **Web of**, **Sensational**, **Hulk**, **Iron Man**, **Fantastic Four**, **Thor**, **Daredevil**. Also variant covers of the above and more. Various comics from DC, Image, Marvel and loads of different tpbks at 15% off RRP. For further information please send an A4 SAE to: M. P. Burstall, 1 Northside Court, Northside, Patrington, Hull HU12 OPA.

Dark Star Comics — the **2000AD**/**Judge Dredd**/British Marvel reprint specialist. Now in stock: over 30,000 comics and *Dredd* trading cards. **Viz**, **Mad Magazine**, **Tiger** comic and girls' comics (1940s to 1980s) also in stock. 95% of stock is untouched, unread warehouse copies, prices from 50p each. So, what are you waiting for? Just send an SAE stating your interests to: Dark Star Comics, 18 Golden Ball Lane, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 6NW and we'll rush you our latest comics lists!

Hot comics for sale: mostly recent independent hot issues. Entire runs available at discounted prices and many special "one-off" editions. Send an SAE for further details including price list to: Dave C, 20 The Paddock, Gateacre, Liverpool L25 5PZ or e-mail at: Chau4now@aol.com

Comic book bargain bags: £30 worth of comics (guide price) for £20, plus £3 towards post and packing (any size order). £20 multiples only please as I have already sorted the comics into separate lots. Lots are a mix of Marvel, DC and independent 1960s-1990s, poor to nm. Cheques/POs to Paul Rolph, Cemetery Lodge, Cemetery Hill, Exning, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7JH.

Need to sell large selection of comics including Marvel (American and British), Dark Horse, **2000AD** (first issues) and many more. Whole collection must go as one — realistic prices please. Please send SAE for list to D. Price, 16 Parry Jones Close, Blaina, Gwent, South Wales NP3 3NH or telephone 0149 529 2157.

For sale: DCs and Marvels, many titles. Firsts, sets and specials. Some copies signed by artist/writer. All reasonable — everything must go! Send SAE to Damian, 1 Jessop Close, Newport, Gwent NP1 0BU.

For sale: American comics some slight soiling rear cover otherwise most fine, vfn interior, late Silver Age, stamped cents copies unless stated otherwise. **Silver Surfer** 2 £35 3 £25 5 £20 6-8; **Submariner** 1 £40 2 3 4 cents £12; **Captain Marvel** 4 5 £10 8 9 £6; **Iron Man** 2 vg £22 3 cents £22 6 7 9 £13; **Plastic Man** 1 £20 3 4 5 £8 8 9 10 £6; **Dr Solar** 1 vg+ £80 2 vg £35 4 vg- £12 8-27 £10 to £7; **Captain Action** 1 £20 2 cents £12; Warren cents **Vampirella** 1 £60 6 9 vg £12; **Eerie** 2 £15 5 9 11 12 £8; **Creepy** 1 vg+ £20 2 £18 3-33 £10 to £6; **Fantastic Four** 25 cents popular stamps g £30 100 10d £15. British comics: **Dandy** unfolded 376 377 381 388; **Beano** 349 355 £25; **Victors** 1966/68 fine £1; **Radio Fun** 1948/49 vg £6; **Thriller Picture Library** all staple burn o/w fine- 171 to 314 £7; **Commando Picture Library** f to vfn 600 to 1990 80p; **Sexton Blake Library** no staples, holes threaded, ex colours 1931/1941 £4.50. Contact Mr Beaty, 81 Bankhead, Gardenstown AB45 3YP.

For sale: hardback and softback books by Ramsey Campbell including his first book **Inhabitant of the Lake** (very rare) £75. For a complete list with prices contact Kevin Broxton, 33 Meadowcroft Road, Leyland, Preston PR5 3AH. Tel: 0177 243 6631.

Collections for sale, all nm unless indicated: **Aliens** (1st series) 1 (2nd print) 2-6; **Aliens** (2nd series) 1-4; **Batman: Cult** 1-4; **Batman vs Predator** (Prestige) 1 (both covers) 2 3; **Books of Magic** (1st series) 1-4; **Hitman** 1-10; **Maxx** 1-7; **Preacher** 1 4-11 16-21; **Sandman** 1-9 14 18-20 37 49 50 52-54; **Spawn** 1 8-10 12 14 15 22 24 27 29 30 37 50; **Star Wars: Dark Empire** 1-6 (fn); **Superman vs Aliens** 1-3; **Robocop vs Terminator** 1-4; **Vampirella** 0; **Vampirella 25th Anniversary Special**; **Vampirella/Shadowhawk** book 1 & 2; **Vampirella Classic** 1; **Vampirella: Death and Destruction** 1 2; **Vampirella: Dracula War** (2nd print); **Vampirella: Summer Nights**; **Vampirella of Drakulon** 1 2; **Vampirella: Morning in America** book 1; **Vengeance of Vampirella** 0-17 25. A Total of 131 items all bagged — £25 for the lot including p&p. Please contact Dr S. Hussain, 20 Logan Avenue, Glasgow, Scotland G77 6LZ.

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If you have any unusual or rare comics you would like us to consider for inclusion, please drop us a line at the address below enclosing: title, issue number, date, grade and minimum acceptable price ('the reserve').

We will be happy to consider comics related merchandise as well, including artwork, books posters, figures, toys, trading cards and TV and film related items.

We will accept Lots for the March Catalogue up until the first week of February, 1997.

If you would like a copy of our current catalogue, send three 1st class stamps to the following address and you will be sent a copy upon publication (slower than a speeding bullet).

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WANTED

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted advertisements must be no longer than 50 words, and only single private ads can be published free of charge.

Wanted in fine condition: **Batman: Dark Knight Archives** vol 2 and **Comics Scene** 3/96 (*Batman Animated Guide*). Also required: **Best of DC Digest** 36 42 48 54 66 71; **DC Special Digest** 2 24 (Flash); **Amazing Heroes** 29 52 100 104 113 119 123 146 and **Comics Interview** 125. Details of prices, etc to Michael Connolly, 6 Cromwell Rd, Belfast, N. Ireland, BT7 1JW.

Low grade reading copies of early '60s Marvels wanted. Particularly **FF** 1-12; **Spider-Man** 1-7; **Hulk** 1-6; **Journey Into Mystery** 84 88-112; **Tales of Suspense** 39-

ADVERTISING TERMS & CONDITIONS:

Whether for publication or not, all ads must be accompanied by full name, address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

■ All private classified **Wants** and **Announcement** ads (comics or card-related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. (One ad per letter/issue)

■ **For Sale** ads and dealer wants & announcements are as follows:

(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) £5.00 inc VAT

(ii) List ads: Including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Per 100 words (or part thereof) £10.00 inc VAT

Full payment (to Comics International) must accompany advertising copy

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BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT

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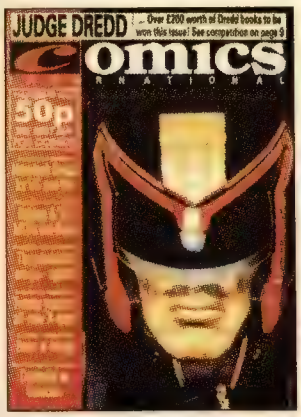
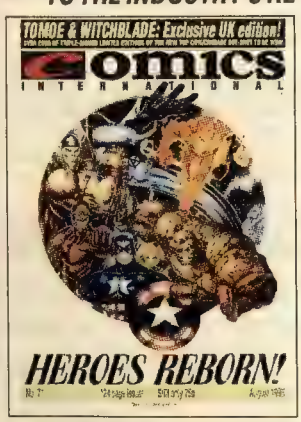
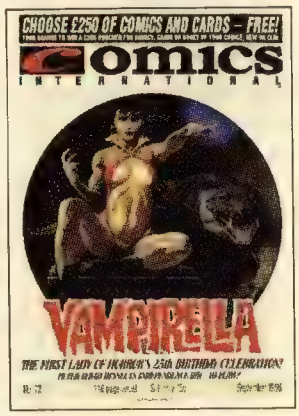


TO THE INDUSTRY'S RE-INVENTION OF TODAY...





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49 and pre superhero **Monster** issues. Contact Gary: 0175 270 6215.

Coins wanted! 1973/4 (circ) Marvel medallion coins of **Spider-Man**, **Hulk** and **Conan** with or without holders — as advertised in Marvel UK and US publications in early-mid '70s. Please call John Pires on 0181 771 8278.

Wanted: **Tom Puss Comics** (Birn Brothers, 1949) will pay £150; **Panda Comics** (same series, 1949) will pay £150; **Tom Puss in Rhymeland** will pay £100, **Jack & Jill** all colour gift books (edited by A. Mills) will pay £40. Write to Piet Koudenburg, Cortenhoeve 14, 2411 JM Bodegraven, NL - Netherlands.

Wanted: *Spawn Powercardz* (Caliber Games 1995) desperately seeking the following cards 3 7 9 60 188. Work postal alchemy and send them to me. Current prices paid for quality cards, from popular to ultra rare. Please write to: Mr Wright, 20 Eastliegh Drive, Mansfield Woodhouse, Mansfield, Notts NG19 8PL.

Wanted: **Superboy Adventure Book** 1957-'58; any **Super Summer Holiday** annuals; **Blackhawk** (Strato) 1-3 10 13; **Super Coloured Comic Album** (Boardman); **Superman All Colour Comics** (Australian); any **Mammoth**, **Century** or **Super Comic Albums** (Australian); any Curt Swan daily newspaper Superman strips; anything published on the work of Curt Swan. Please contact Jim Kealy, 37 Ramillies Road, Mill Hill, London NW7 4LY. Tel: 0181 959 4174.

I am looking for a limited edition comic. I don't know its name, but what I do know is that it stars Carmen Elektra and is signed by her and limited to 1666. If you have one for sale please contact me at: 116 The Ridgeway, Kingsbury, London NW9 0UG. Or e-mail on: IRAMADI@MSN.COM

Wanted: **Death: High Cost of Living** 1 platinum edition (money no object); **Terminator: Burning Earth** 2 3 4; **Taboo** 1 2 3 4 9 + special; any **Puma Blues**; **Detective** 471; any Hellboy appearances eg. Diamond's **Celebrating Diversity** catalogue, San Diego specials, etc. Phone Dublin, Ireland (003531) 452 4575 and ask for David, after 7pm only.

Wanted: **Star Wars**, **Star Trek**, **Quantum Leap** and **Sliders** comics in exchange for *Star Wars* CCG cards as I have 100s of rares and uncommons to swap. Please send lists to Anthony Pick, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral, Merseyside L47 2DT or telephone 0151 632 4640.

English 1950s space, horror, crime, superhero, jungle, western comics wanted. **Space Adventures**, **Spaceman**, **Whiz**, **Master**, **Captain Marvel**, **Space Commando**, **Marvelman**, **Planet**, **Crimson Comet**, **Captain Valiant**, **Swift Morgan**, **Mystery in Space**, **Marvel Family**, **Super Thriller**, **Strange Worlds** and similar 1940s/'50s items. Mike Morley, 5 Crompton Ave, Sprotboro Road, Doncaster DN5 8ED.

Desperately wanted: **Elftrek** 2 (Dimension Graphics); **Elfquest Portfolios** 1 & 2; Elfquest miniatures (by Ral Partha) and any other Elfquest memorabilia. If you can help, please call Sarah on 0181 402 8315 (eves).

Does anyone have: **Skye Blue** 1-2 (Mu Press); **Ehlissa** 1-2 4-31 34 37-on (Highland Graphics); **Blood and Kisses** 3 (FantaCo); **Bloodlines** 4 (Vortex); **Skeleton Key** 12 (Amaze Ink); almost any of Hanther's **Tandra** albums (Hanthercraft); **Swan** 1 (Little Idylls); **Pulps** 3 (French zine); **Yesterday's Lily** (Dragon's Dream, 1979); Jeff Jones' **Spasm** (Last Gasp); **Taboo** 5; **Laundryland** 3 (Fantagraphics); **The Witching Hour** 13 (1971); **Vampirella** 32 (Warren); **Voyage** 2? Contact Fabio P. Barbieri, 33 Brewster Road, Leyton, London E10 6RG. Tel: 0181 539 7842.

Wanted: **Star Wars** 103; **Battle Action Force** 25th Feb '84 - 13th Oct '84; **Eagle Weekly** 13th Nov '82 - 19th Nov '83; **Conan the Savage** 9 11; **Wonder Woman** 184. Please write with prices, etc to: Aubrey Hall, Rockdell, Cootehill, Co. Cavan, Ireland.

Wanted: any issues of the original US **Transformers** series and related mini-series. Also, **Blood Syndicate** 17 and **Hardware** 18 by DC Milestone and any issues of Marvel's **Pinhead**. Write to Matthew Dixon, 126 Barmpton Lane, Darlington, Co Durham DL1 3HF.

One drastically reduced wants list follows. DCs: **Adventure Comics** 210 211; **Batman** 51-60 62 65 66 70 72 73 79 85 92 99; **Blackhawk** 9-12 14-22 24-31 33 35 36 38 42-44 48-50 52-54 56 58 65 67-70 83 93 96 105 121; **Detective Comics** 200-206 209 210 213 214 216 218 220 225 229 230 254; **House of Mystery** 61 63 76 84; **House of Secrets** 15 16; **Mystery in Space** 3-5 7 9-11 13 15 16 18 19 21 35 38 39 44-47; **My Greatest Adventure** 2 5 14; **Our Army at War** 83 86 87 93 95; **Strange Adventures** 2 7-12 15-17 19-28 30-33 35-49 51-55 57 58 62-64 67-69 73 76 77 80 82-86 88 89 91 92 94 102-104 106-108 110-112 119; **Superman** 1-12 14 15 17-27 29-33 36-47 50-56 59-63 67 71 75 76 87; **Tales of the Unexpected** 3 14 15 17 21 26 29; **World's Finest** 71-74. Marvels: **Gunsmoke Western** 56 78-80; **Journey into Mystery** 51 54 55; **Rawhide Kid** (Kirby) 17 21 22; **Strange Tales** 67 69; **Strange Worlds** 4; **Two-Gun Kid** 52-54. Independents: **Adventures of the Fly** (Archie) 3 8; **Alarming Tales** (Harvey) 1 3-5; **Avenger** (ME) 3 4; **Doctor Solar** (GK) 26 29-31; **Fighting American** 1-3 5-7; **Flyman** (Archie) 34; **Magnus** (GK) 27; **Mad** 1-6 12 13 18 20 23 , **Tales of the Mysterious Traveler** (Charlton) 2-10 12 13; **Thunder-Bunny** (WaRP) 1; **Tor** (St John) 2 5. Please write with prices /grades to: D. G. Skinn, 8 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, samples should be sent with advertising copy.

Wargods of Atlantis 3, featuring the dynamic brushwork of David Morris and Paul Davies over the usual cosmic pencils of Dek Baker. Meet the Sonic Boom Boys and the Black Manta in this monster issue. Please send four first class stamps or a quid to Dek Baker, 50 Hever Avenue, Kingstanding, Birmingham B44 0PP.

Strange Weather Lately: Martin Nitram 1 is out now from Metaphrog. "Ambitious and original..." **CI** #76. A limited edition of 500 copies, with a numbered lino-print £2.50 inc. p&p (outside of UK + 50p). Please make cheques payable to J. Chalmers and send to, Metaphrog, 34 Springhill Gdns, 1/R, Shawlands, Glasgow G41 2EY.

The Incredible Hulk: Beneath the Desert Sun. It is 1964, and the Hulk battles Iron Man in the desert. Also two articles and a colour cover. Price £3 including postage, from: Steve Nottingham, 37, Maxwell Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 1RG.

Dachshund Distribution DD, is a mini mail order service for comics in A6 format. So far available: **Guest List Girls** £1, **Missive Device** 1 & 2 £1 each, **Sad Animal** 2 70p, **Jape** 2 & 4 50p each, **Simon Cat** 50p — the lot for a fiver. Cash or stamps preferred. Write to: Dachshund Distribution, c/o Andy Konky Kru, PO Box 8892, London SW15. Also available is the normal sized US comic **"Silly Daddy"**, **TPB** (1-7) 8 9 10 11 together for £10. (Complete sets only, sorry.) All prices include post & packing.

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MANCHESTER	**SATURDAY: JANUARY 18th, MARCH 22nd MAY 3rd** SACHAS HOTEL, TIBB STREET, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER
NEWCASTLE	**SATURDAY: JANUARY 25th, MARCH 8th APRIL 26th** UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA, STUDENTS' UNION BALLROOM, SANDYFORD ROAD, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
NOTTINGHAM	**SATURDAY: FEBRUARY 1st, MARCH 29th MAY 17th** VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE, GEDLING STREET, NOTTINGHAM
PETERBOROUGH	**SATURDAY: FEBRUARY 22nd** GREAT NORTHERN HOTEL, STATION APPROACH, PETERBOROUGH
SHEFFIELD	**SATURDAY: FEBRUARY 8th, APRIL 19th** MAIN HALL, SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY, HOWARD STREET

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FUTURE COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE DATES:
2ND MARCH, 4TH MAY, 6TH JULY, 3RD AUGUST,
7TH SEPTEMBER, 2ND NOVEMBER 1997.

eVENTS

An at-a-glance guide, this listing gives the dates and locations of all forthcoming events advertised in this issue of ***Comics International****. It includes a bracketed number after each entry noting the page where the advertisement with the event's full details appears.*

JANUARY

18/1 **MANCHESTER:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tibb St, Piccadilly (p 89)
19/1 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street (p 89)
19/1 **LONDON:** Comic, Card & Related Mart with guest Deborah Hyde, TUC Congress Centre, 23-28 Gt Russell St (p 91)
25/1 **NEWCASTLE:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Student's Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (p 89)
25/1 **WEYMOUTH:** Comic, Card & Sci-Fi Mart, Rembrandt Hotel, Dorchester Rd (p 31)
26/1 **CHESHUNT:** Comic, Film & SF Fair, Grundy Park Leisure Centre, Windmill Lane, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire (p 38)
26/1 **HULL:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Comfort Friendly Inn, Anlaby Road (p 89)

FEBRUARY

1/2 **NOTTINGHAM:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham (p 89)
2/2 **LONDON:** Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street (p 90)
8/2 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic, Card & Related Mart, Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool (p 91)
8/2 **LONDON:** Comic, Sci-Fi & Film Fair, Westminster Central Hall, Storey's Gate, Westminster, London (p 38)
8/2 **SHEFFIELD:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sheffield Hallam Univ, Howard St (p 89)
9/2 **MANCHESTER:** Northern Sci-Fi '97 Fair, The Armitage Centre, Moseley Road, Fallowfield, Manchester (p 37)
15/2 **COVENTRY:** Comic, Card & Related Mart, Univ Student's Union, Priory St (p 91)
15/2 **GLASGOW:** Comic & Card Mart, The Arches, Midland Street (p 53)
15/2 **LEEDS:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds (p 89)
16/2 **CARDIFF:** Comic, Card & SF Mart with guest Charles Adlard, The Angel Hotel, Westgate Steet, Cardiff (p 31)
16/2 **LONDON:** Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street (p 17)
16/2 **LONDON:** Comic, Card & Related Mart, TUC Congress Centre, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London (p 91)
22/2 **GLOUCESTER:** Comic, Card & Sci-Fi Mart, Gloucester Leisure Centre, Bruton Way, Gloucester (p 31)
22/2 **PETERBOROUGH:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Great Northern Hotel, Station Approach, Peterborough (p 89)
23/2 **BRISTOL:** Comic, Card, Sci-Fi & Toy Fair, Whitchurch Sports Centre, Bamfield, Whitchurch, Bristol (p 33)
23/2 **LEICESTER:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The YMCA, Granby Street (p 89)

MARCH

1/3 **BIRMINGHAM:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Carrs Lane Church Centre (p 89)
1/3 **EXETER:** Comic, Card, Sci-Fi & Toy Mart, Riverside Leisure Centre, Exeter (p 33)
2/3 **LONDON:** Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street (p 90)
8/3 **NEWCASTLE:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Student's Union Ballroon, Sandyford Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (p 89)
9/3 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic, Card & Related Mart, Central Hall, Renshaw St (p 91)
15/3 **BRISTOL:** Comic, Card & SF Mart, Easton Leisure Cnt, Stapleton Rd West (p 31)
15/3 **LONDON:** 2-day UKCAC '97, The Institute of Education, WC1 (p 32)
15/3 **LONDON:** The National Comics Awards Presentation Dinner, The Hotel Russell, Bloomsbury, London WC1 (p 34)
22/3 **MANCHESTER:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tibb St, Piccadilly (p 89)
23/3 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street (p 89)
29/3 **NOTTINGHAM:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham (p 89)

APRIL

5/4 **BATH:** Comic, Card, Sci-Fi & Toy Mart, The Window Art Centre, Bath (p 33)
5/4 **LEEDS:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds (p 89)
5/4 **SWINDON:** Comic, Card & SF Mart, Oasis Leisure Centre, North Star Ave (p 31)
6/4 **LONDON:** National Comicbook Marketplace & Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1 (p 81)
12/4 **BIRMINGHAM:** 2-day Memorabilia '97, The NEC, Birmingham (p 15)
19/4 **GLASGOW:** Comic & Card Mart, The Arches, Midland Street (p 53)
19/4 **SHEFFIELD:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sheffield Hallam Univ, Howard St (p 89)
20/4 **HULL:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Comfort Friendly Inn, Anlaby Road (p 89)
20/4 **LONDON:** Comic, Card & Related Mart, TUC Congress Centre, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London (p 91)
26/4 **NEWCASTLE:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Student's Union Ballroon, Sandyford Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (p 89)
27/4 **LEICESTER:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The YMCA, Granby Street (p 89)

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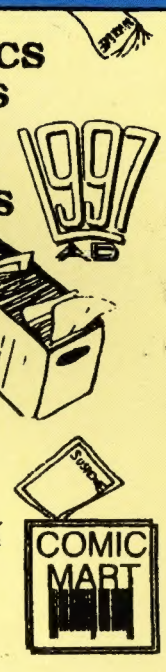
MULTI-MEDIA
ORIGINAL ART
PAPERBACKS
POSTERS/PRINTS
SCI-FI/FANTASY
SOUNDTRACKS
STAR WARS/TREK
STILLS/PHOTOS
TELEFANTASY
TOYS/GAMES



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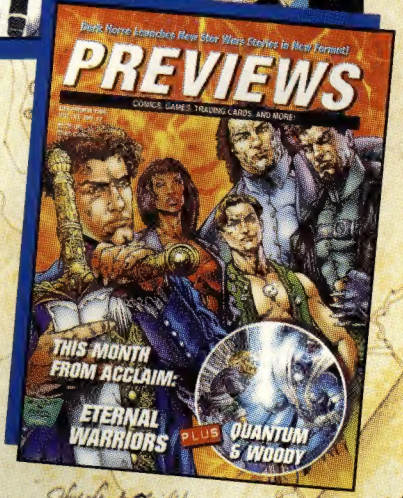

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